The Fourth Book of Moses Called NUMBERS

INTRODUCTION

1. Title. Numbers forms the fourth book of the Pentateuch, as the five books of Moses are called. The title "Numbers" comes by derivation from the LXX title *Arithmoi*, through the Latin *Numeri*, of which "Numbers" is a translation. The Hebrews called the book *Bemidbar*, "in the wilderness."

2. Authorship. The classic belief of the majority of believers in all ages is that the books of the Pentateuch are the handiwork of Moses. In Exodus we have the account of Moses' early life, followed by his call, with the divine commission given to him, and his acceptance by the people as their leader. In Numbers he is portrayed as a mature leader. The stress and strain of the difficulties through which he passed with his people made him an instrument peculiarly fitted to record the history of those events. No other author has ever been disclosed who could have written the Pentateuch. The name of Moses as its author must stand.

3. Historical setting. The value of the book of Numbers is not least in that it records in much detail the nomadic period of the history of Israel, a story that stirs the faith of every true believer today. Through this unbiased record we become acquainted with the life and fortunes of the Hebrew people under Moses. This gifted author selected his material and arranged it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Moses was a worthy narrator of the history and character of the Hebrew people, as well as a capable leader, who under God brought them into a coherent religious unity that time and distress could not dissolve. Thus in the book of Numbers we have an inspired narrative, the historic credibility of which cannot be lightly cast aside.

The text of the book has been standardized. It is written in what are really the old Hebrew characters, and represents the text much as it existed around 330 B.C. It appears to have suffered comparatively little from simple errors of transcription. The variations in certain manuscripts are few, and of no particular importance. Such dates as scholars may assign to any sources that Moses may have used under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit could at best be only tentative and approximate.

4. Theme. The preceding books of the Pentateuch carry on the narrative of the history of Israel's ancestors from the creation, and continue through the captivity in Egypt and the Exodus to the sojourn at Sinai, where the book of Exodus leaves the Israelites. Numbers opens at Sinai with the census of the adult males, adds further regulations beyond those enumerated in Leviticus, traces the march from Sinai, the wanderings in the wilderness, to the arrival on the steppes of Moab, and ends with a group of regulations.

It is a living book that has ministered to the spiritual life of men throughout history. Its principal objective is to exalt Jehovah as supreme God, in all His holiness, majesty, and care for His chosen people. With the wonderful progress of the chosen people there is the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, with their selfish motives and aims. In the background are the people murmuring, manifesting a lack of patience. Prominently set forth are Moses, Miriam and Aaron, Balaam, the sons of Aaron, religious leaders with their strong and weak points. The record closes with the supremacy of Moses as God's chosen leader of His people.

The dwelling of Jehovah in the midst of His people, His careful planning for them in detail, the poignant events in connection with outstanding individuals, priests and Levites

as a divinely appointed cordon formed "that there be no wrath upon the congregation," all contribute to a splendid portrayal in vivid narrative of the deepest religious value to the church today, a narrative that rests upon the historical fact of the dwelling of God among His people.

5. Outline.

I. Preparation for the March, 1:1 to 4:49
A. Camp organization, 1:1 to 2:34.
1. The numbering of Israel, 1:1–46.
2. Orders about the Levites, 1:47–54.
3. Camping order of the tribes, 2:1–34.
B. Levitical organization, 3:1 to 4:49.
1. The priestly family, 3:1–4.
2. Dedication of the Levites for the first-born, 3:5–51.
3. Duties of the Levites on the march, 4:1–49.
II. Statement of the Levitical Legislation, 5:1 to 6:27.
A. Miscellaneous religious regulations, 5:1 to 6:21.
1. The exclusion of the unclean, 5:1–4.
2. Laws of recompense and of offerings, 5:5–10.
3. The trial of jealousy, 5:11–31.
4. The Nazirite vow, 6:1–21.
B. The priestly benediction, 6:22–27.
III. The Setting Up of the Tabernacle. The Incident at Kadesh, 7:1 to 14:45.
A. Inaugurating the sanctuary service, 7:1 to 9:14.
1. Offerings of the princes at the dedication, 7:1–88.
2. The voice in the sanctuary, 7:89.
3. The lamps in the tabernacle, 8:1–4.
4. Consecration of the Levites, 8:5–26.
5. The second Passover, 9:1–14.
B. The departure from Sinai, 9:15 to 10:36.
1. The cloud over the tabernacle, 9:15–23.
2. The silver trumpets, 10:1–10.
3. The order of march, 10:11–28.
4. The invitation to Hobab, 10:29–32.
5. The first journey, 10:33–36.
C. Murmuring and rebellion, 11:1 to 14:45.
1. Sin at Taberah, 11:1–3.
2. Sin at Kibroth-hattaavah, 11:4–35.
3. Sin of Miriam and Aaron, 12:1–16.
4. Mission of the spies, 13:1–33.
5. Rebellion of the people, 14:1–45.
IV. Sections of Levitical Legislation, 15:1–41.
A. Offerings, 15:1–31.
1. Law of burnt offerings, and freewill offerings, first fruits, 15:1–21.
2. Law of trespass offerings, and presumptuous sins, 15:22–31.
B. Miscellaneous regulations, 15:32–41.
1. The Sabbathbreaker, 15:32–36.

2. Law of fringes, 15:37–41.
V. The Revolt Against the Aaronic Priesthood, 16:1 to 17:13.
A. Rebellion of Korah and its suppression, 16:1–50.
B. The rod of Aaron, which budded, 17:1–13.
VI. Additions to the Law, 18:1 to 19:22.
A. The charge and rewards of priests and Levites, 18:1–32.
B. Law of the red heifer, and the pollution of death, 19:1–22.
VII. Events of the Final Journey, 20:1 to 22:1.
A. From Kadesh to Transjordan, 20:1 to 21:9.
1. The water of strife, 20:1–13.
2. The insolence of Edom, 20:14–21.
3. The death of Aaron, 20:22–29.
4. King Arad, 21:1–3.
5. The brazen serpent, 21:4–9.
B. Approaching Canaan, 21:10 to 22:1.
1. Final marches and first victories, 21:10–32.
2. Conquest of Og, 21:33 to 22:1.
VIII. Events in the Steppes of Moab, 22:2 to 27:23.
A. The Story of Balaam, 22:2 to 24:25.
1. The coming of Balaam, 22:2–38.
2. The prophecies of Balaam, 22:39 to 24:25.
B. Closing events of Moses' life, 25:1 to 27:23.
1. Sin and atonement at Shittim, 25:1–18.
2. Second census of Israel, 26:1–65.
3. Request of Zelophehad's daughters, 27:1–11.
4. Joshua succeeds Moses, 27:12–23.
IX. Additions to the Law, 28:1 to 30:16.
A. The yearly routine of sacrifice, 28:1 to 29:40.
B. Law of vows made by women, 30:1–16.
X. Victories East of Jordan, 31:1 to 32:42.
A. Defeat of Midian, 31:1–54.
B. Settlement of the two and a half tribes, 32:1–42.
XI. The Itinerary From Ramses to Jordan, 33:1–49.
XII. Final Instructions, 33:50 to 36:13.
A. Arrangements relating to the land of Canaan, 33:50 to 34:29.
1. The law of possession of the Holy Land, 33:50–56.
2. Boundaries of the Holy Land, 34:1–15.
3. Allotment of inheritances, 34:16–29.
B. Arrangements relating to cities, 35:1–34.
1. Cities for the Levites, 35:1–8.
2. Cities of refuge, 35:9–34.
C. The marriage of heiresses, 36:1–13.

CHAPTER 1

1 *God commandeth Moses to number the people.* 5 *The princes of the tribes.* 17 *The number of every tribe.* 47 *The Levites are exempted for the service of the Lord.*

1. The Lord spake. Moses emphasizes the fact that the Lord spoke to him in the tabernacle, in the Wilderness of Sinai, because subsequent revelations after its erection took place there. Previous revelations had been on Mt. Sinai itself. The One who met with Moses was Jehovah. The Hebrews had now been in the wilderness nearly a year (see Ex. 19:1; Num. 10:11, 12).

The tabernacle. Literally, "the tent of the meeting" (see Num. 3:7; 4:3; Ex. 27:21; Lev. 1:1, 3). The place where God met Moses and His people.

The first day. This was one month after the erection of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:2, 17; Num. 9:1, 2).

2. Take ye the sum. The enumeration and classification of males was a wise step to ensure orderly arrangements for the encampment and for marching. That this was its purpose is suggested by the fact that the numbering was evidently completed by the 20th of the same month, the very day on which Israel set forth from the Wilderness of Sinai to journey to the Wilderness of Paran (ch. 10:11). There had been a previous enumeration, for the purpose of levying the half-shekel tax needed for the erection of the tabernacle (see Ex. 30:12; 38:26). This second numbering was less a census than an organizational procedure—a mustering of men of military age by tribes and smaller units, with a leader (Num. 1:4, 5) appointed for each tribe.

House of their fathers. Here the group is the family. The term may, however, be used for an entire tribe descended from one ancestor (ch. 17:2), or again, a division of a tribe (Num. 3:24; Ex. 6:14).

Their polls. Literally, "their skulls." This is a term used to designate individuals.

3. Twenty years old. On arriving at this age every male in Israel became responsible for paying the Temple half shekel (Ex. 30:14) and was considered fit for the responsibilities of war.

Aaron. Aaron was to help in the numbering, though the Levites as a whole were excluded from it. Moses and Aaron represented the highest authority in the nation.

By their armies. No such rule was laid down in the former numbering (Ex. 30). This was evidently a military registration.

4. A man of every tribe. Men of authority, respect, and dignity were made responsible for assisting in this work.

5. The names. Verses 5–15 contain a list of 12 chief men, whose names recur in chs. 2, 7, and 10. Most of the names have meanings, as Elizur, "God is a rock." Several of the names appear in the NT, some in slightly different forms. Eight of these men had names that are compounds of *'El*, a title of God, but only one of their fathers' names (Deuel in v. 14) has *'El* in it. This sudden increase in *'El*-names suggests an increased interest in the God of their forefathers as the leaders of the Israelites looked forward to the deliverance promised by God (*'Elohim*) to Joseph (Gen. 50:24, 25).

8. Nethaneel. Meaning "the gift of God." This is a name found frequently in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

10.Elishama. Meaning "God hath heard."

Gamaliel. Meaning "God is a reward," used in (Acts 5:34).

16. Princes. This title is also given to the spies in ch. 13:2, but there translated "ruler." These 12 persons were "called," that is, chosen, to help Moses in carrying out the census.

Renowned. Literally, "named" or "called." It refers to men mentioned with respect by God or fellow men.

Heads of thousands. Jethro had suggested to Moses that he take men of authority to help him in his administration (Ex. 18:17, 21);he was now commanded to take men of position, the chief commanders.

Thousands. This word probably refers to a large group such as a clan, a tribal division. It is also used of a military division. See p. 556.

The registration of God's people under Moses has its lesson for the church today under Christ. The numbering of His children by name suggests the fact that God knows each of His children personally (2 Tim. 2:19). The divine Shepherd is acquainted with each member of His flock (John 10:3), and the book of life has an eternal meaning for each child of God (Rev. 3:5).

18. All the congregation. The number for each tribe is given (vs. 20E43). For their order of march and their arrangement in camp, see on ch. 2.

46. Numbered. The number of men of military age is put at 603,550. This total is exactly the same as that given in Ex. 38:26, but in Num. 11:21 and Ex. 12:37 the round number 600,000 appears.

47. The Levites. The Levites were exempt from military service; hence they were not numbered with the tribal forces. Levi was a tribe devoted especially to the service of God (v. 50) in place of the first-born (ch. 3:12). There were 12 tribes besides Levi, because Jacob had adopted Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph (Gen. 48:5, 6); consequently, instead of one tribe of Joseph, there were two separate tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh. A separate command from Jehovah was given in respect to the Levites (Num. 1:48–50). Their duties were to be of a different nature, and are stated more fully in chs. 3 and 4.

50. Tabernacle of testimony. "Testimony" refers to the Ten Commandments. It is found 61 times in the OT. When it is used in connection with the ark, the veil, Aaron's rod, an individual, or the congregation as a whole, the emphasis and importance lie with the Ten Commandments (see on Ex. 25:16). The high honor of the ark was not due to anything inherent within that piece of furniture itself, but to the fact that it was the resting place of the two tables of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments. The word "testimony" is occasionally translated "witness" (Num. 17:7, 8; 2 Chron. 24:6). The words "witness" and "testimony" (Ex. 25:16; 38:21; 40:3) are suggestive of the fact that the Ten Commandments speak of the moral and ethical nature of Jehovah's character, and that He looks for the same characteristics to be manifested in His people.

Minister. The word thus translated is used in Numbers for the sacred service of the Levites only. The meaning of the word is always honorable, and refers also to the holy ministrations of angels (Heb. 1:14). In its various forms it is used of certain kinds of secular service of special importance or responsibility, of Joshua the personal servant of Moses (Ex. 24:13; 33:11), and of the personal ministry of Elisha for Elijah (1 Kings 19:21).

51. The stranger. That is, a non-Levite, one who had no authority to approach the sanctuary, a Jew—not necessarily a foreigner, but one not included in the immediate context (cf. Deut. 25:5; Hosea 5:7; Ex. 29:33).

52. Standard. From the verb "to look," "to behold," "to lift up a banner." The noun therefore suggests something conspicuous, distinguished, or exalted. It may be applied to

any sign or mark, such as a prophetic sign (Ex. 3:12), a miracle (Joshua 24:17), a memorial (Joshua 4:6), or to the heavenly bodies as signs (Gen. 1:14; Jer. 10:2). Some suggest that the word "company" would give better sense here than "standard" (see Num. 2:3, 10, 18, 25).

The Jews have a tradition that Reuben's standard had the figure of a man, that of Judah a lion, the standard of Ephraim an ox, and that of Dan the figure of an eagle.

53. No wrath. That is, for the violation of the sanctity of the tabernacle, which was the dwelling place of God among His people. In the NT the individual Christian is God's holy sanctuary (1 Cor. 6:19), as also is the church as a whole (1 Cor. 3:16, 17). In both of these texts the word translated "temple" is the one that applies to the holy and most holy places, exclusive of all other buildings adjacent to it in the Temple area.

The word translated "wrath" is from a root allied to the Syriac and Arabic that means "to break off," "to snap off." Thenoun, masculine, is "splinter," a piece broken off. So the wrath of God here involves the idea of severing from the church one who has sinned concerning God's holy things. The Levites were stationed round about the tabernacle to prevent any unauthorized person from entering the sacred precincts of God's dwelling place.

Outside the priestly cordon the laity of Israel pitched their tents according to a divinely given plan. God was in their midst. His unapproachableness was stressed. Only designated persons of particular office could draw near to Him. This was strictly observed. The Christian ideal is disclosed by Paul in Heb. 4:16, wherein he exhorts the Christian to come "boldly unto the throne of grace," into the very presence of Jehovah.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

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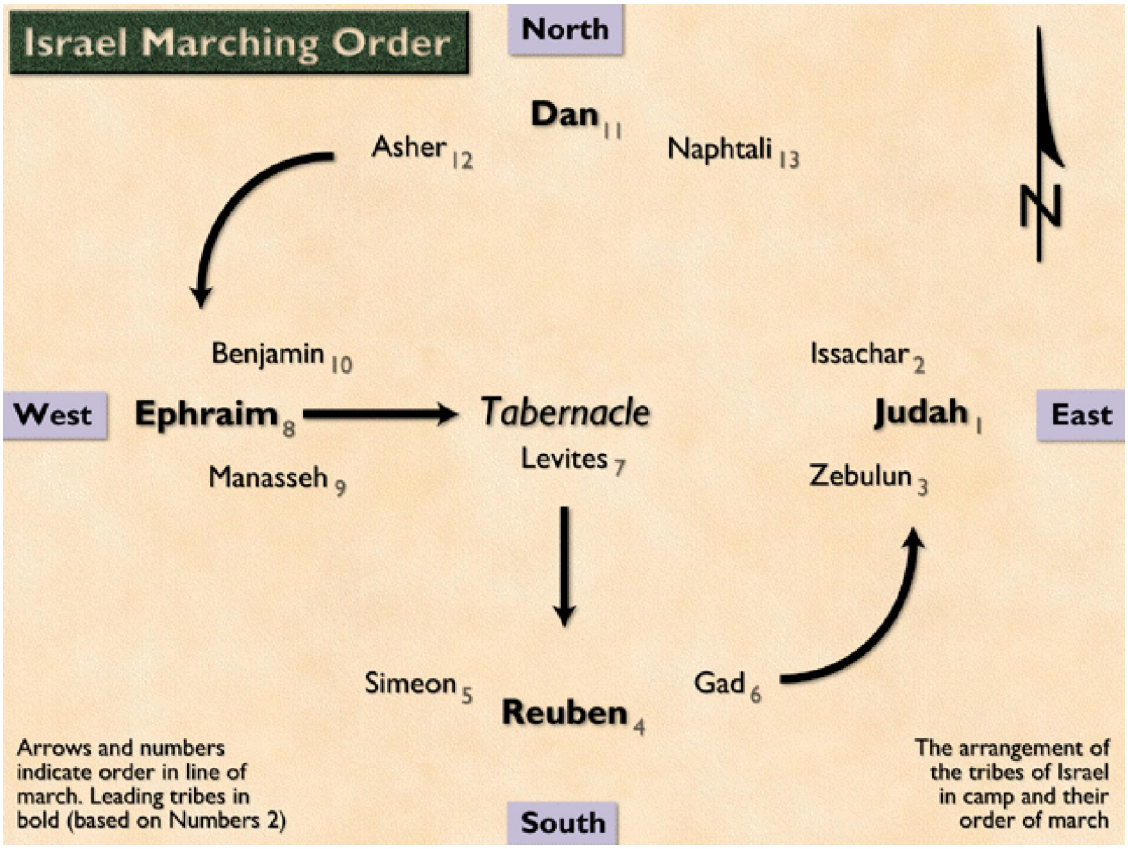
51 SR 156; 3T 345
52 SR 157
53 3T 345

CHAPTER 2

The order of the tribes in their tents.

1. And unto Aaron. These instructions were addressed to both Moses and Aaron. Moses alone is mentioned in v. 34. But since Aaron and his sons had to pack the articles to be carried by the Kohathites, it was but natural that he too should be informed (ch. 4:5, 15). Chapter 2 contains the account of the camping arrangements of the tribes in the wilderness. That of the four divisions of Levi is given in ch. 3:23, 29, 35, 38. The following diagram illustrates the arrangement of the tribes of Israel in relationship to the sanctuary:
[1]

[1]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Nu 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



2. By his own standard. See on ch. 1:52.

Ensign. The standard would pertain to a larger group (vs. 3, 10, 18, 25), although each family group would display its "ensign."

Far off. The injunction to preserve the holiness of the sanctuary area was strictly enjoined and enforced.

3. East … rising of the sun. Such a doubling in expression is common in Hebrew. Exodus 26:18, for example, reads literally, "for the south side southwards."

Judah. As the pre-eminent tribe, Judah is assigned the east, the position of honor. Some suggest that the name Judah comes from the verb "to praise," from Leah's words at his birth, "Now will I praise" (Gen. 29:35). With regard to him Jacob predicted, "Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise" (Gen. 49:8).

10. Reuben. This tribe camped "on the south side," literally, "southwards." The four quarters of the compass were named from the viewpoint of a person facing east. Reuben was the eldest of Jacob's 12 sons (Gen. 35:23), but forfeited the honor and prerogatives of the first-born because of instability of character.

17. Midst of the camp. If the order of mention in this chapter indicates the order of march, the Levites with the sanctuary followed the camps of Judah and Reuben. The account of their actual march, however (ch. 10:14–21), places the tabernacle, that is, the tent and the court hangings, between the first two divisions, Judah and Reuben. It was sent on ahead so that it could be set up and ready to receive the "sanctuary," that is, the holy things—the ark, altars, etc.—that followed Reuben in the center of the marching host. It is not possible to determine whether the Levites and the sanctuary preceded

Reuben and his group, or followed them. In marching as in camping, the various divisions under their respective banners proceeded strictly in formation.

In his place. Literally, "each individual upon his hand." The expression, "upon the hand of the Jordan" (ch. 13:29, Heb.), is translated in the KJV, "by the coast of Jordan." See also Deut. 23:12 and Jer. 6:3, where the word for "hand" is in both instances translated "place."

18. Camp of Ephraim. The second son of Joseph (Gen. 41:52; 46:20), Ephraim was reckoned among the children of Jacob, blessed by him, and given preference over Manasseh (Gen. 48:1, 5, 13, 14, 17, 20). The name is connected with the verb "to bear fruit," "to be fruitful," with the noun depicting "a fruitful land," one of grain or pasture.

25. Camp of Dan. Dan was the son of Jacob and Bilhah (Gen. 30:6; 35:25). The meaning of the name is "judge." Its verb root means "to judge," "to act as a judge." The equivalent Arabic root means "to be obedient," "to be submissive," also "to govern," "to recompense." The exalted position of Dan in the circumstances of this verse is in great contrast to the depths to which he afterward fell; for he settled among the heathen, dropped out of the sacred account, and finds no part among the 12 tribes of the New Jerusalem (see Judges 18; Rev. 7:5–8).

34. So they set forward. The multitude that came out of Egypt had now become like a disciplined army on the march, grouped according to tribe, clan, and family.

Chapters 1 and 2 give us the size and discipline of the Israelite host. The center of attention was the tabernacle, God's dwelling place. Jehovah was in their midst (Deut. 4:7; 23:14; Ps. 78:52, 53; cf. Rom. 8:31), the pledge of hope, security, and progress. He was their Protector (Hosea 11:10, mighty to deliver (Isa. 49:25, 26). He was to them a light by night and a welcome shade by day (Isa. 4:5). All these concepts centered in the tabernacle, the abiding place of God.

The awe and reverence the tabernacle inspired were due to the fact of Jehovah's indwelling. The separation of the divine dwelling place from the common walk of life helped to instill respect for authority and a sense of discipline among the people. Today the church is like an army on the march, and Jehovah is with her (see 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Peter 2:9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2,17 PP 375

CHAPTER 3

1 *The sons of Aaron.* 5 *The Levites are given to the priests for the service of the tabernacle,* 11 *instead of the firstborn.* 14 *The Levites are numbered by their families.* 21 *The families, number, and charge of the Gershonites,* 27 *of the Kohathites,* 33 *of the Merarites.* 38 *The place and charge of Moses and Aaron.* 40 *The firstborn are freed by the Levites.* 44 *The overplus are redeemed.*

1. These also are the generations. This is a common formula that occurs frequently in Genesis (Gen. 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). It is a title used to introduce a new section of the narrative. "Generations" literally means "origins," and is from the verb frequently translated "to bear," "to bring forth," "to give birth to." It means the account or the history of the person or persons named.

Aaron and Moses. These men are setforth as the chosen heads of the tribe of Levi, which was selected for sacred service. One would expect the name of Moses to come first. But no descendants of Moses are mentioned; and as the passage deals only with the

descendants of Aaron, his name takes precedence. Some have suggested that inasmuch as no descendants of Moses are mentioned, but only those of Aaron, Moses, as the one who gave them special instructions in regard to their sacred duties, was regarded as their spiritual father. The office of Moses, though higher than that of Aaron, was personal and not tribal, whereas Aaron was the progenitor of a long and distinguished line of priests.

In the day. An important day in the history of the Levites, it marks the point of time that saw the beginning of their organization and commission for the sacred duties of the church.

In mount Sinai. It may be there is a glance back to Ex. 24:1, where Nadab and Abihu are mentioned, though not as sons of Aaron (see Ex. 24:16; 31:18; Lev. 7:38; 25:1; 26:46; 27:34; Num. 28:6).

2. Sons of Aaron. Four in number only up to the time of the erection of the tabernacle, when Nadab and Abihu died.

3. Anointed. Numerous passages of Scripture deal with the anointing of the high priest only (see Ex. 29:7, 29; Lev. 8:12). Others mention his sons also (Ex. 28:41; 30:30; 40:15). As to the difference between the anointing of the high priest and that of the common priests, see on Ex. 29:8. Literally, "to smear." It is allied with the Arabic word "to wipe," "to stroke with the hand." Used with the word "oil" it means "to consecrate to sacred service," and is the only word in the OT so used. It is the root from which the term *Messiah* comes. The Greek word by which "anoint" is translated is used five times in the NT, four of which refer to the *anointing* of Christ by the Father. It emphasizes, therefore, that Christ (a word from the same Greek root, see on Matt. 1:1) was "anointed" by divine authority, and that He was the recipient of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the richest manner possible (see Acts 10:38).

Consecrated to minister. Literally, "he filled their hands." This is an ancient expression (Judges 17:5, 12), the exact meaning of which is obscure. Some say it meant to fill the hand with money (see Judges 18:4). Others maintain that the "filling" has reference to the office and authority with which the recipient was invested. The exact meaning seems to have been lost sight of, since it was later applied to the altar (Num. 7:88; Eze. 43:26). The descendants of Aaron became priests automatically, but his first sons were appointed, having been born before their father was called to that sacred office.

4. Before the Lord. This expression, occurring twice in this verse, seems to stress not so much their unnatural death as the grief of God at the incident.

Strange fire. Literally, "unlawful fire" or "unauthorized fire," since the word "stranger" in Num. 1:51 means one without credentials. For the reason why it was unlawful, see on Lev. 9:24; 10:1.

They had no children. This fact is not stated in Lev. 10, but is mentioned in 1 Chron. 24:2. Had these two men had children, they, and not Eleazar and Ithamar, would have succeeded Aaron to the high priesthood. All priestly families traced their descent from Eleazar and Ithamar.

In the sight of Aaron. Literally, "at the faces of Aaron," meaning "during the lifetime of Aaron" (see Gen. 11:28). The descendants of these two men were divided into courses in the time of David as follows: 16 for Eleazar's offspring and 8 for those of Ithamar (1 Chron. 24:3, 4).

6. Bring … near. This is a common expression, not used in the technical sense (ch. 16:5) of an outward act of presentation, but simply of assigning to men their designated duties. It is an expression used of subordinates approaching to receive orders.

Minister unto him. The Levites were under Aaron to assist him in his responsibilities and to guard the tabernacle. Aaron here represents the entire priestly caste, which in v. 9 is referred to as "Aaron and … his sons." For duties later given to the Levites, see Chron. 23:28–30; 25:1–7; 26:12, 20, 29–31.

7. Keep his charge. That is, they will carry on all the duties of service of Aaron and other priests.

Of the whole congregation. These words refer to the sacrificial ritual conducted in behalf of the laity of Israel.

8. Instruments. That is, the furniture and vessels of the tabernacle.

9. Aaron. Aaron and his sons became the instructors of the Levites. They were the ones to whom the Levites were responsible in the discharge of their duties.

Wholly given. From *nethunim nethunim*, literally, "given given," a typically Hebrew expression; the related word *nethinim*, "dedicated," was later applied to foreigners who became servants of the Temple in the time of Ezra (Ezra 7:24; etc.). They are believed by some to have been descendants of the Gibeonites (Joshua 9:27).

They are many helpful lessons to be found with respect to the details of the organization of the priests and the Levites. The Levites were "wholly given" to Aaron as high priest, that is, they were under his full control. The fully surrendered Christian, completely in Christ's hands, controlled and energized by the Holy Spirit, is of the "royal priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9).

The Levites were to give all of their time and strength to cooperating with Aaron in the ministry of the sanctuary. The believer today is to cooperate with Christ for the spiritual health and growth of the church. A price was paid to redeem the first-born (see on vs. 12, 13). Christ paid the price of His blood to redeem sinners. Those that enter into the church, and live by faith, are enrolled in the books of heaven.

Out of the children of Israel. The entire tribe of Levi belonged to God and was given to His sacred service. Similarly various types of workers in the Christian church are spoken of as "given" (Eph. 4:11).

10. The stranger. The word here does not have the same meaning as in ch. 1:51, where it signifies a non-Levite. Here it includes the Levites; in fact it refers to them particularly. The Levites were not allowed to intrude upon the special sphere of Aaron and his sons. Violation of this divine injunction was one of the sins of Jeroboam, who permitted non-Levites to perform priestly functions (see 1 Kings 12:25–33).

Cometh nigh. These words do not mean to approach physically, in the ordinary sense, but to come to perform any of the sacred duties of the priesthood.

12. Instead of all the firstborn. Anciently the father in the family performed the priestly functions (Ex. 13:8; Judges 17:10), and passed that office on to the first-born son. That custom is now replaced by the appointment of the Levites, who had rallied to Moses at the time of the worship of the golden calf (Ex. 32:26).

13. On the day. This is a reference to Ex. 13:1–3.

Hallowed unto me. All the first-born are Jehovah's because He did not slay them with the Egyptians. Every human soul belongs primarily to God, but here the Lord claims

those brought out from Egypt as His first fruits. The devoting of the first-born to the Lord is commanded in Ex. 22:29; 34:20; 13:11–15; Num. 18:15.

Mine shall they be. Literally, "for my possession they shall be." Claimed by God as set apart to Him, declared so by His name (see Ex. 6:8; 12:12).

15. Every male from a month old. See ch. 18:16. The first-born were not to be redeemed until they reached the age of one month; therefore the Levites who took their place were numbered only from above that age.

17. Sons of Levi. To the three men mentioned in this verse are traced the three main divisions of the Levites in Jerusalem after the Exile (Gen. 46:11; Ex. 6:16; cf. Num. 26:57).

18. Libni, and Shimei. Repeated in Ex. 6:17; 1 Chron. 6:17. See also 1 Chron. 23:7; 26:21, where Libni is given as Laadan.

Kohath. Mentioned also in Ex. 6:18, 19.

Amram. A member of the family of Kohath, and the father of Moses and Aaron (Ex. 6:18, 20).

20. Mahli. Compare the name of the first husband of Ruth (Ruth 1:2), and the feminine form of the same name in Num. 26:33.

21. Gershon. The Gershon family camped west of the tabernacle, between it and the standard of Ephraim (cf. chs. 1:53; 2:18; 3:23).

Shimites. This family is mentioned in Zech. 12:13 as being of the house of Levi.

23. Behind the tabernacle westward. The term "westward" is, literally, "seaward," referring to the Mediterranean Sea. The Hebrew mentally faced eastward when thinking of the points of the compass (see on Ex. 3:1). Of course, the Mediterranean Sea would be considered "westward" only from the viewpoint of a person situated in the land of Palestine. Some have asserted that use in the Pentateuch of later terminology, such as "seaward" to mean "westward," is obvious evidence of later, non-Mosaic authorship. That later terminology appears occasionally in the Pentateuch and elsewhere in the OT is a fact not open to question; but the conclusion that this necessarily indicates later authorship than that commonly accepted is entirely unwarranted.

The republication of a 17th-century account of the founding of New Amsterdam, for instance, would be rather meaningless to many modern readers unless New Amsterdam was explained as the original name for New York City. The substitution of "New York" for "New Amsterdam" would, however, in no way affect either the accuracy, reliability, or authorship of the account. Thus it was with terminology in the books of Moses if the inspired record was to remain intelligible to later readers. The Hebrew people, however, regarded the Sacred Scriptures with too much respect to permit any change that would alter the thought.

24. Lael. An unusual name in its formation, being formed of the preposition "to" and the word "God"—"belonging to God." There is but one other example of this in the OT, Lemuel (Prov. 31:1).

25. The tabernacle. The framework of the tabernacle itself was in charge of the Merarites (v. 36); so the "tabernacle" here evidently means the inner layer of ten curtains (see Ex. 26:1–14).

The tent. The second layer of 11 curtains made of the hair of goats.

The covering. The final layers of rams' skins dyed red and "badgers' skins" (see Ex. 26:14 and on Ex. 25:5).

26. Cords. That is, those of the tabernacle and of part of those of the court. The Merarites also had charge of part of the latter (vs. 36, 37).

29. Kohath shall pitch. The position of Kohath was between the tabernacle and the standard of Reuben (see ch. 2:10).

30. Elizaphan. Meaning "God has watched over" (cf. 1 Chron. 15:8; 2 Chron. 29:13).

31. The ark, and the table, and the candlestick. See on Ex. 25:10–39.

The altars. The two altars, one for burnt offerings (Ex. 27:1) and one for incense (Ex. 30:1–10), were alike entrusted to their care.

The hanging. The curtains of the tabernacle and the court were assigned to the Gershonites (v. 25). The "hanging" refers to the veil that separated the holy from the most holy place (Ex. 26:31, 33, 35; 27:21; 30:6; 36:35; 38:27; 40:3, 22, 26; Lev. 4:17; 16:2, 12, 15; 21:23). The expression in Num. 4:5 "the covering vail" means, literally, "the veil of the screen" (also Ex. 40:3, 21).

32. Eleazar. Eleazar was a Kohathite (see Ex. 6:18, 20, 23). He was chief over Elizaphan and all the Kohathites, and as the eldest surviving son of Aaron, was therefore the chief prince or overseer of the Levites.

35. Abihail. The father of Esther had the same name (Esther 2:15).

36. The boards. See on Ex. 26:15, 19. For the bars, pillars, and sockets, see on Ex. 26:19–26.

38. Moses. Moses held the position of honor in the camp, the central place that gave him ready access to all parts.

Aaron. The hereditary priest, representing with Moses the civil and sacerdotal authority.

Keeping the charge. The priests were encamped on the east of the tabernacle, the place of honor.

40. Number all the firstborn. In order to substitute the Levites for them (vs. 41, 45; cf. vs. 12, 13). Since there were 273 fewer Levites, the first-born had to redeem 273 of their number at 5 shekels each (vs. 39, 43, 46–50). This was the regular redemption price of the first-born (see ch. 18:15, 16).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

6 PP 350

13 DA 51; PP 274

CHAPTER 4

1 *The age and time of the Levites' service.* 4 *The carriage of the Kohathites, when the priests have taken down the tabernacle.* 16 *The charge of Eleazar.* 17 *The office of the priests.* 21 *The carriage of the Gershonites.* 29 *The carriage of the Merarites.* 34 *The number of the Kohathites,* 38 *of the Gershonites,* 42 *and of the Merarites.*

2. Sons of Kohath. Kohath was the second son of Levi. His descendants are listedsecond in ch. 3:19, 27, after the Gershonites. As the Levites were separated from Israel for sacred service, so the Kohathites are now separated from the rest of the Levites for more sacred duties.

3. Thirty years old. These men would be in the prime of their physical life, and well fitted for the work of carrying the tabernacle and its equipment. In ch. 8:23–26 the age is given as between 25 and 50 years. Later writers record a further adjustment, attributed to David, beginning the service at 20 years of age (1 Chron. 23:24, 27; 2 Chron. 31:17; Ezra 3:8). An Apocryphal writer also mentions this (1 Esdras 5:58). The first injunction,

giving the beginning age as 30 years, may have been a temporary measure. Thirty years marked the age at which a Jew was considered mature and ready to assume all the responsibilities of his rights and privileges (cf. Luke 3:23). Beyond the age of 50 a Levite was not bound to do service, but merely to assist in the tabernacle according to his ability (Num. 8:25, 26).

The host. From a Hebrew word used for an army in ordered array, and so used again and again in the Scriptures. It may also be translated "warfare," referring to the fighting service in which the recruits and their officers had to engage. In this verse it has reference to the sacred duties of a soldier of God. This is the Christian of today understands as the service of a soldier of the cross.

4. Most holy things. That is, the ark, the table of shewbread, the candlestick, altars, the veils, and the various sanctuary implements. The Hebrew expression is the one given for the most holy place in Ex. 26:33.

5. Covering vail. See Ex. 35:12; 39:34; Luke 23:45. The reference here is to the veil that divided the holy from the most holy place (Ex. 26:31–33). The first veil, for the door of the tabernacle, was committed to the care of the Gershonites (Num. 4:25).

6. Of blue. The ark was the only article of holy furniture that was covered with a blue (or violet) cloth when being carried from place to place, to mark it distinctly.

Staves. The poles by which the ark was carried were apparently never taken out of the rings (Ex. 25:14, 15). Presumably, Aaron and his sons entered the most holy place in order to cover it.

7. The table of shewbread. Literally, "the table of the faces," meaning the "table of the Presence," referring to the bread that was placed before the Lord.

Spoons, and the bowls. See Ex. 25:29.

Continual bread. This expression does not occur again in the Bible. The explanation is found in Ex. 25:30, in harmony with the literal words here: "the bread of continuity." Compare with the NT terms, meaning "the bread of the setting out" (Matt. 12:4; Mark 2:26; Luke 6:4), and "the placing forth of the loaves" (Heb. 9:2).

8. Cloth of scarlet. This is an additional covering, beyond what was used for other articles.

9. Candlestick of the light. This full name occurs again in Ex. 35:14. For the candlestick, or lampstand, see on Ex. 25:31.

His tongs. See on Ex. 25:38.

Snuffdishes. The same word is translated "censers" (v. 14 and ch. 16:6), and "firepans" (Ex. 27:3; 2 Kings 25:15; Jer. 52:19). The reference may be to shallow metal pans or saucers.

10. Bar. Probably referring to staves, or poles, that were put through the rings for carrying (Ex. 30:4, 5). The same word is translated "staff" in Num. 13:23, and "yoke" in Nahum 1:13.

11. Golden altar. The clear altar of incense, overlaid with gold (Ex. 30:3).

12. Instruments of ministry. The instruments, knives, vessels, pans, etc., that were used within the tabernacle. Some commentators refer this expression to the "cloths of service" mentioned in Ex. 31:10.

13. The altar. That is, the bronze altar of burnt offerings (Ex. 27:1–3).

A purple cloth. The purple or deep red cloth may have been used as a distinctive mark, because this was the altar of burnt offerings that stood in the courtyard, and not in the holy place.

This verse speaks of bearing away the "ashes." Many commentators say nothing about this for the reason that the meaning of the word thus translated is uncertain. The root verb is used but 11 times in the OT and is generally rendered "maketh …fat" (Prov. 15:30) or "shall be made fat" (Prov. 11:25; 13:4; 28:25; Isa. 34:7). The noun, found seven times, is without exception translated "fatness." The same root, used eight times and listed as a separate noun, is translated "ashes." The adjective, three times in the OT, is rendered "fat." All of this suggests that the reference may be to the burned fat or grease that accumulated from the burnt offerings.

14. Basons. These were for the blood that was to be sprinkled upon the altar. Amos 6:6 has the same word for wine containers. In that case it may suggest either the red color of the wine or the inebriety of the drinkers.

15. After that. No Levite was allowed to touch the holy things until they had been covered and packed by Aaron and his priests; the Kohathites would then simply lift up the bundles and transport them (vs. 12–14).

To bear it. The Levites were the regular porters (2 Sam. 15:24). Upon two unusual occasions other arrangements were made (1 Sam. 6:8; 2 Sam. 6:3).

Touch any holy thing. The word translated "holy thing" is probably a collective term referring to all the sacred objects.

16. Eleazar. Apparently Eleazar was held personally responsible for the transport of the sacred articles and for their general care.

Oil. See on Ex. 27:20.

Sweet incense. See on Ex. 30:34.

Daily meat offering. This cereal, or meal, offering may be identical with the "meat offering" offered twice daily along with the burnt offering (Ex. 29:38–41; Neh. 10:33), or, more likely, the meal offering for the anointed priests (Lev. 6:20–23).

17. And unto Aaron. Aaron was instructed by Jehovah, inasmuch as it was the duty of the priests to oversee the Kohathites.

18. Cut ye not off. Do not cause the Kohathites to be slain by neglecting your duty of supervision. If the priests were careless, the Kohathites would likely follow their example, and then come under condemnation. Aaron and the Kohathites were of the same tribe. Yet the sacred things could not be touched, and some of them not even looked upon, by the Kohathites. Therefore in moral responsibility the anointed priests were enjoined to be an example, for they were held accountable for their humbler brethren. Similarly, the workers in the Christian church must always be examples of Christlikeness, of victorious living, of full devotion to the truth and all it involves.

19. That they may live. The reward for the faithful, as promised today, is immortality, which has its source in Jesus Christ (Matt. 19:17, 29; John 1:4; 6:47; Rev. 21:27).

Appoint them. In God's work there must be submission to His will. We are not to refuse to accept certain tasks merely because of inclination otherwise.

21. Moses. Aaron cooperated in carrying out the requirements (vs. 1, 19, 34).

22. The sons of Gershon. There were but two (ch. 3:21). The work of carrying all the hangings and coverings was the task of the Gershonites (vs. 24–28), who used ox wagons for this purpose (ch. 7:7).

25. Curtains. That is, to the ten curtains that were the inner covering of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:1, 2).

Tabernacle. The boards of the tabernacle were in charge of the Merarites (v. 31), but the 11 curtains of goats' hair which covered them are here referred to (see Ex. 26:7, 8).

Badgers' skins. The outermost covering of all (Ex. 26:14; see on Ex. 25:5).

Hanging for the door. See on Ex. 26:36.

26. Hangings of the court. See on Ex. 27:9.

For the door. See on Ex. 27:16.

Instruments. See on Ex. 27:19.

27. Appointment of the Aaron. Literally, "by the mouth of Aaron," that is, at his command. The priests were to give the necessary orders to the Gershonites (ch. 3:6, 7).

28. Ithamar. Ithamar was the head overseer of both the Gershonites and the Merarites (v. 33). His was the personal responsibility.

29. Sons of Merari. There were but two families of these (ch. 3:33).

30. Into the service. The same word is translated "host" in v. 3.

31. Charge. The duty of the Merarites was the transport of the actual framework of the tabernacle itself. They too used wagonsons (ch. 7:8). Their burdens would be much heavier than those the Kohathites carried, for they were all the solid parts of the structures, with their accessories.

Boards. See on Ex. 26:15.

Bars. See on Ex. 26:26.

Pillars. See on Ex. 26:32.

Sockets. This is, for the boards of the tabernacle and also for the pillars. See on Ex. 26:19.

32. Pillars of the court. For the pillars and sockets see Ex. 27:10–12.

Pins. See Ex. 27:19; 38:20.

Cords. See on Ex. 35:18.

By name. That is, individual allotment of a particular thing to a particular person.

34. The chief of the congregation. Literally, "the princes of the congregation" (cf. Num. 16:2; 31:13; Ex. 16:22; Joshua 9:15).

Numbered. Not all males descended from Kohath (see ch. 3:28), but only those from 30 to 50 (ch. 4:35).

40. Those that were numbered. The number given in this verse is slightly more than a third part of their males, or all who were fit for service (see ch. 3:22).

47. Service of the ministry. Held by some to be the singing of the Levite choir accompanied by musical instruments, during the sacrificial services. It is to be noted that the age is 30 years and up. This is the age at which Jesus began His ministry (Luke 3:23).

The precise commands detailing duties to particular tribes, clans, and individuals, with age groups specified, have a lesson for the church today. The apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 12 speaks of "spiritual gifts" (v. 1), "diversities of gifts" (v. 4), and "differences of administrations" (v. 5). There are also "diversities of operations" (v. 6); but through all and in all there is "the same God," "the same Lord," "the same Spirit." Also "the body is one," though of "many members" (v. 12); and all must work harmoniously, that there be no tearing to pieces (v. 25). The organized unity of the desert church has its counterpart in the church with its members baptized into vital connection with the Holy Spirit (v. 13).

It is the entrance of the Holy Spirit that conforms all into one body,even the body of Jesus Christ.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

15 PP 705

CHAPTER 5

1 *The unclean are removed out of the camp.* 5 *Restitution is to be made in trespasses.* 11 *The trial of jealousy.*

2. Put out. All ceremonially unclean persons must be removed from the vicinity of the camp. There may, perhaps, have been other reasons, in addition to the principle of quarantine, that prompted this command. But quarantine seems the evident reason.

Camp. This would refer to the camp area in the fullest sense, extending to its limits on all sides (chs. 2, 3). The same word isalso translated "tents," in 2 Chron. 31:2.

Every leper. See on Lev. 13:2 and Additional Note on Lev. 13. The Jews viewed this disease as a mark of God's displeasure. In some cases it was indeed such a mark, as evidence in the cases of Miriam Num. 12:12, Gehazi (2 Kings 5:27), and Uzziah (2 Kings 15:5).

That hath an issue. See on Lev. 15 This class was not excluded from the outer camp.

Defiled by the dead. This class of persons was shut out only from the inner camp (see Lev. 11:24; 21:1, 11).

The word here translated "dead" is *nephesh*, rendered in the English Bible as "soul" in many instances (see on Gen. 35:18). It has various meanings, and here refers to a corpse, regarded as ceremonially unclean (see Num. 6:6, 11; 9:6, 7, 10; Lev. 21:11).

The three classes here specified had certain things in common: (1) the duration of uncleanness—seven days after the removal of the cause—and (2) the conception of their being a means of defiling others who came in contact with them.

3. In the midst whereof I dwell. The same expression is used of the Holy Land (ch. 35:34), in admonition not to pollute it by deeds of violence and injustice.

6. A man or woman. The Hebrew words here refer to specific individuals.

Men. From a generic term meaning "mankind."

Against the Lord. A sin against a fellow man is looked upon as a sin against the person of God, and therefore required a sacrificial offering as well as restitution to the injured person (see Num. 5:7; cf. Lev. 6:2–4). Although it is possible to sin against God without involving injury to a fellow man, it is not possible to sin against man without committing a sin against God.

7. Recompense his trespass. Literally, "return his guilt." Here the abstract "guilt" is used for the concrete thing that he stole, or whatever he may have realized from its disposal.

With the principal. Literally, "with its head," that is, in full.

Fifth part. Note a similar compensation in Lev. 6:5; 22:14 (see Lev. 27:11, 27, 31).

8. Kinsman. This is the word *go'el*, from the verb "to redeem, to act as a kinsman." It is applied to Christ as the Redeemer (see Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; 78:35; 103:4; Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 47:4; 54:5; 59:20; 60:16). Since an Israelite would usually have a kinsman, it is possible that the man without kin would be a proselyte.

Unto the Lord, even to the priest. Literally, "for Jehovah for the priest." The priest stood as the personal representative of Jehovah, and the property becomes his (see Lev. 23:20).

The ram of the atonement. The required offering (Lev. 5:15; 6:6; 7:7), pertaining to the priest in Jehovah's stead.

9. Offering. The word "offering" has the meaning of "that which lifts off," that is, from a larger amount, and is devoted to a sacred purpose. Jewish teaching is that this is reference to the first fruits (Ex. 23:19), so that they too became the property of the priests (Num. 15:19–21; 31:29, 41, 52; Deut. 12:6, 11). The idea of a contribution, whether in the general sense or for a specific purpose, applies appropriately here. The "offering" becomes the priest's due (Lev. 7:14, 32, 34).

10. Shall be his. This verse mentions both sources of priestly revenue: dues to Jehovah and gifts to the priests. An individual priest could not claim specific gifts from particular individuals. The giving was the responsibility of the owner, subject to this general admonition and to the principle that whatever Jehovah claimed as His own must come first.

13. No witness. Two witnesses were necessary to secure a conviction (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; Deut. 19:15). The penalty for proved guilt was death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22–27). There is every suspicion on the part of the husband at least, but no actual proof.

14. Spirit. From *ruach*, translated "spirit" in the OT. It occurs 377 times in the Hebrew, and is translated "spirit" 232 times. The dominant idea of this word is "power." When the queen of Sheba saw the splendors of Solomon, "there was no more spirit in her " (1 Kings 10:5). When Isaiah speaks of the horses of Egypt as flesh "and not spirit," he means that they a "and not spirit," he means that they were weak as compared with God. A man who has control of his spirit is both strong and worthy (Prov. 16:32; 25:28). Here (Num. 5:14)the term indicates an intense impulse or emotion.

15. Tenth part of an ephah. Approximately 2 dry qt. (2.21 l.).

Barley meal. A cheaper kind of flour, a coarse food used only by the very poor (Judges 7:13; John 6:9, 13), and as fodder for animals (1 Kings 4:28). The "fine flour" commanded for other offerings (Eze. 46:14) was not allowed in a case of this kind, where moral corruption and dishonor were the issues. The coarse elements of this oblation were indicative of the coarseness and grossness of the sinful act.

Pour no oil. This was a most unhappy occasion, so oil, a symbol of joy and happiness, was excluded. Oil and frankincense, although included with a meal offering of first fruits, were not allowed with a poor man's sin offering (Lev. 2:15; 5:11).

Of jealousy. The Hebrew word here is plural in number, "jealousies," inasmuch as the offense, if the woman was guilty, was against both God and her husband. Also, more than one person was guilty.

Of memorial. A phrase to remind men that God does not condone iniquity, neither does He forget it until it has been confessed (1 Kings 17:18; Eze. 29:16; Hosea 8:13; Jer. 44:21; Ps. 25:7).

16. Before the Lord. That is, to the tabernacle.

17. Holy water. This would be water in the laver that was reserved for the priests' ablutions Ex. 30:18, 19. Some maintain, however, that it refers to *running water* (see Num. 19:17; Lev. 14:5). This expression is used nowhere else in the Bible. There is no

similarity whatever between this and the so-called holy water provided by certain churches today.

An earthen vessel. The cheapest kind of vessel, to conform to the coarseness of the flour—and the heinousness of the sin. The vessel would probably be smashed after the ceremony, as in the case of the sin offering (Lev. 6:28; cf. 14:5, 50). Some commentators suggest that this implied the broken life of the woman, should she be found guilty.

Dust. The reason for this provision is not clear. Perhaps, being in a sense sacred, it would harm only a guilty person.

18. Uncover the woman's head. This was a gesture of shame (see Lev. 10:6; 13:45; 21:10).

In her hands. These various acts would have the tendency to break down the woman's fortitude and cause her to confess, if guilty.

Bitter water. The literal expression in the Hebrew is "waters of bitterness." Not that the water was of itself bitter of taste, but that for the guilty person there would be bitter results (see Jer. 2:19; 4:18; Eze. 23:48).

19. Instead of thy husband. The Hebrew reads, "under thy husband," meaning "subject to thy husband." In Eze. 23:5 it is rendered "when she was mine," literally, "when she was under me," and Rom. 7:2, where the word translated "woman" is a compound meaning "under one man," that is, under his direction as the head of the house.

Be thou free. That is, free from the curse involved, if not guilty.

21. Make thee a curse. When cursing or taking an oath, people would recall her name in their imprecations called down upon offenders, saying, "May Jehovah make you like that woman."

Thy thigh. Meaning, perhaps, that the woman would not again give birth to a healthy child (see v. 28). She would thus become a bitter disappointment to her husband, unable to build up his house.

23. Blot them out. The written words would be washed off into the water, and so transferred to it.

24. To drink. The woman drank the water *after* the meal offering (v. 26), but the act is anticipated here.

26. The memorial. As a reminder to Jehovah to prevent the waters of bitterness from doing harm to the woman if she was innocent. The term is a technical one (Lev. 2:2, 9, 16; 5:12; 6:15; 24:7).

27. Shall be a curse. She would be an example and a warning to others.

28. Free. That is, declared innocent (see Jer. 2:35), and so suffering no harm.

Shall conceive. A compensation implying divine favor, and therefore highly prized by the Israelites.

31. Bear her iniquity. The basic principle of the whole ordeal was that the outcome lay in God's hands.

CHAPTER 6

1 *The law of the Nazarites.* 22 *The form of blessing the people.*

2. Man or woman. We have few records of women Nazirites. They would have been expected to meet conditions similar to those enjoined upon men. If a woman was subject to a father or a husband, either one had the authority to annul her vow (ch. 30:3–5). The fact that the mother of Samson was not to drink wine implies that she may have taken a temporary Nazirite vow (Judges 13:4, 5), In connection with this first use of the word

"Nazirite" it should be stated that the spelling here given is employed for two reasons: It is a better transliteration of the Hebrew; it protects against a popular misunderstanding of the term as signifying an inhabitant of Nazareth. However, in quotations from Scripture, the spelling there given, is employed.

To vow a vow. Compare with Num. 15:3, 8; Lev. 22:21; 27:2.

Nazarite. The Hebrew root means "to separate," "to consecrate," "to dedicate" in a religious or ceremonial sense. The noun *nazir* means "consecration," "crown" (as a sign of consecration), and refers also to the person consecrated. The fuller expression, "Nazarite unto God" Judges 13:5, 7, means one fully dedicated to God.

3. Wine. From a word for grape wine, a common drink (Gen. 14:18; 27:25; Judges 19:19; 2 Sam. 16:2; Amos 5:11; 9:14; etc.).

Strong drink. Intoxicating drinks in general; used of drinks made from other materials than grapes. The Hebrew root means "to become intoxicated," and is used metaphorically of destruction (Isa. 49:26). Wine and strong drinks were forbidden priests on duty (Lev. 10:9), and to the Nazirites (see Judges 13:4, 7, 14). They were held to be particularly bad for princes and others in responsible positions (Prov. 31:4), and all others were cautioned as to their use (Prov. 20:1; 23:29–33; Hab. 2:15).

Vinegar. A sour product of the manufacture of the inferior grades of wine of acid content. It was diluted with water by the common people and used as an inexpensive drink.

Liquor of grapes. "Juice of grapes" (RSV). It may refer to any drink made from fresh grapes.

Kernels. The words "kernels" and "husk" are not found elsewhere in the OT, and their meaning is uncertain. The RSV renders them "seeds" and "skins."

5. No razor. The best-known example of unshorn hair is that of Samson (Judges 13:5; cf. Num. 8:7). This injunction is found in all references to Nazirites, for the long locks were an outward mark of dedication to God (see Lev. 21:5; Judges 13:5; 16:17; 1 Sam. 1:11).

The days be fulfilled. See Acts 21:24, 26.

Locks of the hair. The locks of hair would clearly mark the consecrated Nazirite (see Judges 16:17).

6. No dead body. The Nazirite was forbidden to touch a dead body, to be in a house with a dead person, or to accompany the corpse to the grave (ch. 19:11–16). Similarly, the high priest was forbidden to come into contact with a dead body (Lev. 21:11). The literal expression here is "the soul of the dead" (see on Num. 5:2 and on Gen. 35:18). As with other injunctions, Samson did not observe this one (Judges 14:19; 15:8).

7. For his father. The same command was applied to the high priest (Lev. 21:11), though not to the priests who assisted him (Lev. 21:1, 2).

The consecration. This refers to his unshorn locks as a royal crown. This very word is translated "crown" in Ex. 29:6; 39:30; Lev. 8:9; 21:12; 2 Sam. 1:10; 2 Kings 11:12; 2 Chron. 23:11; Ps. 89:39; 132:18; Prov. 27:24; Zech. 9:16.

9. Defiled. The defilement was caused by the dead body, and therefore not intentional on the part of the Nazirite. Even unintentional or "hidden" sin was looked upon as serious (Ps. 19:12; 90:8).

Shave. As the hair had become defiled, it was necessary to dispose of it. How this was to be done is not mentioned. Ancient practice among other peoples was to bury defiled objects.

His cleansing. This involved sprinklingwith water that contained the ashes of the red heifer (Num. 19).

10. Two turtles. That is, turtledoves; or else two young pigeons. Those defiled by uncleanness offered the same inexpensive offerings as a substitute for more expensive ones (Lev. 5:7; 12:8; 15:14, 29). A non-Nazirite defiled by contact with a dead body was not required to make an offering (Num. 19:19).

11. Sin offering. The purpose of this sacrifice was the removal of the defilement. It was offered at the consecration of priests (Ex. 29:1, 14; Lev. 8:2, 14), of the Levites (Num. 8:8, 12), also for ceremonial defilement as here (Lev. 12:6, 8; 14:19; 15:15), and for the consecration of objects (Ex. 29:36; Lev. 8:14).

Burnt offering. Dedication is again declared by this offering.

Sinned. That is, he contracted a legal uncleanness, and thereby sinned against God in that he did not take adequate precautions against coming into contact with a corpse. Compare with Christ's emphasis on the importance of cleanness of heart (Mark 7:18–23).

Hallow his head. He again resumes his Nazirite status, with his vows reiterated, after shaving his head and reconsecrating his hair.

12. Consecrate. Having recovered his cleanness, he was required to begin again the whole period of his Nazirite vow.

A lamb. The Hebrew reads, "He shall bring a male lamb, the son of a year, for a guilt offering." The word translated "trespass offering" always implies guilt. To make this offering was to acknowledge guilt (cf. Lev. 5:15).

Shall be lost. The days he had already kept his Nazirite vow were canceled by the defilement.

13. Days of his separation. These may have been of varying periods. However, the examples of Nazirites we have in the Bible are in each case lifelong: Samson (Judges 13:5), Samuel (1 Sam. 1:11), John the Baptist (Luke 1:15).

14. Offer his offering. On the completion of the period of his vow he would return to his ordinary way of life, hence the need of a sin offering. The sin offering was normally offered before the burnt offering. The sin offering was for any omissions of which he may have been guilty during the days of his vow.

Peace offerings. The Hebrew word here is of uncertain origin, and may be connected with the word "peace," or with another meaning "to make restitution." It is an offering for happy occasions, an offering of thankfulness, with the worshiper eating part of the sacrifice.

15. Meat offering. That is, the cereal offering of fine flour, and the libations, such as were used with the burnt offering and peace offerings of v. 14; the sin offering did not require either meal or drink offering.

16. Shall bring. The priest shall bring the offerings to the altar.

18. At the door. The shaving was done beside the slain peace offering (cf. Lev. 3:2), and the hair cast into the fire of the sacrifice on the altar that stood before the door of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:6). The hair had been dedicated to Jehovah; therefore it was destroyed, to eliminate any danger of defilement.

19. Sodden shoulder. The boiled shoulder had been held in readiness.

Upon the hands. The Hebrew reads, "upon the upturned palms" of the Nazirite (see Ex. 29:24; Lev. 8:27).

20. Wave them. The priest waved and received for himself a larger portion of the offering of the Nazirite than he did of any other offering, for the "sodden shoulder" is in addition to the right shoulder (or right thigh) that was already assigned to him (see Lev. 7:30–33).

Holy for the priest. This alludes to the boiled shoulder, the extra portion mentioned in v. 19. The Nazirite presumably ate of the sacrificial meal after he was discharged by the priest.

May drink wine. Probably permissive, referring to the future; the man was now free to live as other men lived. The word for "wine" is the same as in v. 3.

21. Beside that. There was no law to prohibit the Nazirite bringing additional burnt offerings and peace offerings if his means allowed; but only one sin offering was admissible.

23. Saying unto them. This suggests that the blessing was pronounced in the presenceof the entire congregation (see Lev. 9:22; Deut. 21:5).

24. Bless thee, and keep thee. A double benediction for long life and happiness, and protection from loss and sin.

25. Face shine. The word means "to illuminate, to envelop in glory" (see 1 Sam. 14:29; Ezra 9:8; Prov. 4:18; Isa. 60:19).

Be gracious. This suggests every kind of graciousness and tender consideration. No divine attribute is more precious to sinful man than the grace of God.

26. Lift up his countenance. Compare Ps. 4:6. If the face of Jehovah is hidden, then despair settles upon man (Deut. 31:17, 18; Job 13:24). If His face is turned against man, then death and destruction befall him (Lev. 17:10; Ps. 30:7; 34:16; 44:24, 25; 104:29).

Peace. Compare Isa. 26:3. The Hebrew word signifies "oneness," "completeness," and "perfection."

27. Put my name. The name of God was revealed by Him personally (Ex. 3:13–15; 6:3), and is of inexpressible sanctity (Ex. 20:7; 33:19; 34:6, 7).

The Hebrew word "name" has many meanings that are extremely helpful: see "for a name," or "memorial" (Isa. 55:13). Other texts show the connection between God's name and His place of worship (Ex. 20:24; Jer. 7:10); also, His revealed character (Amos 9:6). The fundamental lesson of the expression "put my name upon the children of Israel" is in their being God's private possession, peculiarly His (see on Ex. 19:5) and intimately associated with Him (see Deut. 28:10; Jer. 14:9).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

2 AA 406
22-276T 350
23-27MH 285
27 MH 404

CHAPTER 7

1 *The offering of the princess at the dedication of the tabernacle.* 10 *Their several offerings at the dedication of the altar.* 89 *God speaketh to Moses from the mercy seat.*

1. On the day. According to Ex. 40:17, 18, This would be the first day of the first month of the second year of wandering. It is the day of the completion of the tabernacle

and the anointing of the altar (see vs. 1, 10, 84, 88). The narrative now returns to the first day of the second year, the month preceding the numbering of the armies.

Fully set up. Moses personally supervised the erection of the tabernacle (Ex. 40:18).

Anointed it. See Ex. 40:9; Lev. 8:10, 11.

2. The princes of Israel. This is equivalent to "the chief of the congregation" (chs. 1:5, 16; 4:34).

3. Covered wagons. Needed for the heavy parts of the tabernacle, and covered to provide adequate protection from the weather.

5. Take it of them. The wagons and oxen were a voluntary offering (v. 3) that must have been received gratefully by the Levites for the work of transportation. Moses apparently did not accept the offer until he was specifically authorized by the Lord to do so.

7. According to their service. The Gershonites transported less than the Merarites (v. 8, see ch. 4:24-26, 31–33).

9. Sons of Kohath. The Kohathites received no wagons, for they had no responsibility for the fabric for the tabernacle itself. Their charge was the ark, the table of the shewbread, etc. These things were carried on staves on their shoulders (ch. 4:15).

10. Offered for dedicating. That is, presented for holy service before being brought to the altar. The offering of objects (vs. 13–17, etc.) for the service of the altar was in a special sense a new dedication of the altar itself. For the consecration of the altar see Ex. 29:37; Lev. 8:10, 15.

12. The tribe of Judah. Nahshon, representing his tribe, gave a contribution on the first day. He had been appointed to help Moses in the census and to be the leader of Judah (chs. 1:7; 2:3).

13. Charger.Translated "dishes" (RSV, "plates") in Ex. 25:29; 37:16.

Bowl. Translated "basons" in Ex. 27:3 and other places.

14. One spoon. The Hebrew word is the one usually used for the palm of the hand. The reference here is to a container resembling a dish.

18. Prince of Issachar. The offering of Nethaneel and that of the other princes of the same rank as Nahshon are described in similar terms.

48. Seventh day. This may or may not have been the seventh-day Sabbath. The words refer primarily to the seventh day of the consecration of the altar. At least one of the days of the offerings in dedication must have been the Sabbath, if they were taken consecutively—which seems to have been the case.

84. It was anointed. The dedication offerings of the princes were presented over a period of 12 days.

89. He heard the voice. Jehovah spoke with Moses audibly, even as He had with Adam and Eve in the garden (Gen. 3:9) and with Abram at the door of his tent (Gen. 17:1). Only Moses was allowed in the tabernacle at this time to hear God's message. Apparently even Aaron was excluded (see Ex. 25:22; 40:33, 34; Lev. 16:2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

9 PP 705

CHAPTER 8

1 *How the lamps are to be lighted.* 5 *The consecration of the Levites.* 23 *The age and time of their service.*

2. Lightest the lamps. Literally, "set up the lamps."

The candlestick. The seven lamps of the candlestick, as a unit, illuminated the sanctuary.

3. Aaron did so. (See Ex. 27:21; 30:8; Lev. 24:3, 2; 2 Chron. 13:11).

4. Beaten work. Probably identical with the type of hammered work, *repoussé*, that has been common throughout the East from very ancient times (see Ex. 25:18, 31, 36; 37:7, 17–22). These words are form from a Hebrew term translated "of a whole piece" in Num. 10:2.

6. Cleanse them. This ritual was to be performed for the Levites before they entered upon their solemn duties.

7. Water of purifying. Literally, "water of transgression," that is, water that washes away transgression. This expression is not found elsewhere in the Bible. What was added to the water we are not told. Compare "waters of bitterness" and "water of impurity" (see on ch. 19:9, 18, 19), and the water for cleansing the leper (Lev. 14:4–7).

Shave. Literally, "cause a razor to pass over." Compare this case with that of the Nazirite (ch. 6:9), the leper (Lev. 14:8), and the captive woman (Deut. 21:12).

10. Put their hands. This was a representative act. Some commentators think it was perhaps carried out by the princes, transferring to the Levites the obligations of the congregation in connection with the tabernacle services. The Levites were given to God instead of the first-born; and as the whole family was sanctified through the first-born, so the whole congregation benefited.

11. Offer the Levites. This command is repeated three times (vs. 11, 13, 15). The Levites were a living offering, for service (see Rom. 12:1).

16. Wholly given unto me. See on ch. 3:9.

Instead of the firstborn. Who belonged to God (vs. 17, 18; cf. ch. 3:12, 13).

19. To make an atonement. Literally, "to make a covering," the same root word from which comes the word translated "mercy seat." By discharging these services the Levites made atonement for the children of Israel.

Plague. Often a visitation for disobedience (Ex. 12:13; 30:12; Joshua 22:17). The Levites came between God and the congregation, thus providing a "cover" (atonement) for them.

21. Were purified. Literally, "unsinned," referring to the personal preparation required and not to the ceremonial sprinkling (v. 7).

24. Twenty and five. A Levite between the ages of 25 and 50 years was to accept the responsibilities of the services of the tabernacle. At the age of 50 years he was freed from such duties. There remained to him the privilege of doing minor services in the sanctuary on a voluntary basis, as a mark of honor. He was not arbitrarily retired contrary to his own wishes.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

16 PP 277

CHAPTER 9

1 *The passover is commanded again.* 6 *A second passover allowed for them that were unclean or absent.* 15 *The cloud guideth the removings and encampings of the Israelites.*

1. First month. The exact day is not given, but it is the month in which the tabernacle was set up, the month preceding the census.

Second year. The second counted inclusively. The first was the year in which the Exodus took place (see pp. 182, 187).

2. Passover. Evidently the first after the giving of the law; the problem of ritual uncleanness to which these remarks are prefatory seems to be new (vs. 6–8).

3. At even. Literally, "between the evenings." The precise meaning of this phrase is difficult to determine (see on Ex. 12:6).The same expression is found also in (Ex. 16:12; 29:39, 41; 30:8; Num. 28:4).

Rites. See (Ex. 12:3-28, 42–49; cf. 1 Cor. 5:7; Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7).

6. By the dead body. Hence, unclean (ch. 19:11). As in chs. 5:2; 6:11, the Hebrew word here rendered as "dead body" is *nephesh*, "soul."

Could not keep. An unclean person who partook of a sacrificial feast was to be "cut off" from his people (Lev. 7:20). On "cut off" see on (Ex. 12:15).

8. I will hear. Moses did not offer any solution without seeking divine guidance (Num. 15:34; 27:5; Lev. 24:12).

10. Posterity. This is a provision for future generations.

11. Fourteenth day. A month was given for preparation for observing the Passover.

12. Nor break any bone. See Ex. 12:46; cf. Ps. 34:20; John 19:36.

13. Be curt off. See on Gen. 17:14; Ex. 12:15.

14. Stranger. Literally, "sojourner," one who had taken up residence among the Hebrews. A complete stranger, a foreigner (from a different Hebrew word), would not have been allowed to eat of the Passover (Ex. 12:45, 48).

15. Tent of the testimony. The Hebrew expression thus rendered occurs only here and, as "tabernacle of witness," in (Num. 17:7, 8; 18:2; 2 Chron. 24:6). The usual phrase is "tabernacle of the congregation" (KJV) or "tent of meeting" (RSV).

The testimony. That is, the two tables of stone written by the finger of God and placed within the ark. This moral law, the Decalogue, was the foundation stone upon which Judaism was based. The cloud covered that part of the sanctuary containing the ark, in which rested the holy law, the Ten Commandments.

Appearance of fire. In Gen. 15:17 God is represented under a similar figure.

18. Commandment of the Lord. Literally, "at the mouth of Jehovah." We are not told whether an oral command was spoken. In any case, the removal of the cloud would announce the time for breaking camp.

22. Or a year. The word translated "year" is literally "days," the plural noun to suggest an indefinite period. The same Hebrew word is translated differently in Gen. 4:3; 40:4. See also Lev. 25:29, where the expression "a full year" is from the same word, "days."

The story of the dependence of the church upon God's personal guidance is most appealing. God chose the route, the resting places, and the length of stay at each. The visible sign of His presence in the desert must have been most heartening, providing as it did a strong incentive to faith. For lessons on the cloud see Ex. 13:21; 14:19, 20, 24; Lev. 16:2; Neh. 9:19.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

12 DA 771

CHAPTER 10

1 *The use of the silver trumpets.* 11 *The Israelites remove from Sinai to Paran.* 14 *The order of their march.* 29 *Hobab is intreated by Moses not to leave them.* 33 *The blessing of Moses at the removing and resting of the ark.*

2. Trumpets of silver. There are three OT Hebrew words translated "trumpet." One is the ram's horn used at Sinai (Ex. 19:13) and at Jericho (Joshua 6:5). There was the trumpet used at secular services; then there was the one here called a "clarion" by some writers. It was a straight, slender tube with a flaring mouth.

3. With them. The sounding of both trumpets was a summons to the entire camp. For a significant blowing of the trumpets, refer to Joel 2:15.

5. Blow an alarm. The word for "alarm" is translated "shouting" in Jer. 20:16 and Amos 1:14.

8. The priests. As the trumpets were used for religious duties, and sounded in harmony with God's expressed desires, it was but natural to place the instruments in the custody of the priests and to restrict the blowing of the instruments to them.

9. In your land. The reference is to the Holy Land, when their wanderings would have ceased and the practical use for which the trumpets were made would be ended.

10. Day of your gladness. This would mean any occasion of national thanksgiving (see 2 Chron. 5:12, 13; 7:6; 29:27; Esther 9:19; John 10:22).

In your solemn days. Literally, "on your appointed gatherings," meaning the Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks, Feast of the Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Feast of the Tabernacles (Lev. 23).

Beginnings of your months. That is, the first day of each month, or with every new moon (see article on the Jewish calendar in Vol. II).

11. On the twentieth day. This was the Israelites' first journey from the Wilderness of Sinai, where they had camped for almost a year (see Ex. 16:1; 19:1).

Second year. One year and a little over one month since the beginning of the Exodus (see p. 187).

The cloud was taken up. The cloud had now rested over the tabernacle 1 month and 19 days (Ex. 40:17, 34).

12. Wilderness of Paran. The precise limits of this wilderness have not been determined. In a general way, it was bounded by the Gulf of 'Aqaba on the east, the Gulf of Suez on the west, and the mountains of Sinai on the south. It was Ishmael's dwelling place (Gen. 21:21; cf. Gen. 14:6; Deut. 33:2; Hab. 3:3).

14. Nahshon. The prince in each case (vs. 14–27) was the appointed leader of his tribe (ch. 1:4–16), and issued all orders when on the march.

21. The sanctuary. This does not refer to the tabernacle, or tent, which was carried by the Gershonites and the Merarites, but to the holy things—the ark, etc.—carried on the shoulders of the Kohathites (see ch. 4:4, 15).

25. The rereward. That is, rearward, or rear guard, literally, "the collector." Naphtali, part of the division under Dan, was actually in the very rear. The word is applied to God as protector in Isa. 52:12; 58:8.

29. Hobab. This verse does not make it clear whether Hobab or Raguel was Moses' father-in-law, for the word means merely an "in-law" of any sort. The context must determine each case. But Raguel (or Reuel) was the father-in-law (Ex. 2:16–21); hence his son Hobab was Moses' brother-in-law (see PP 628).

31. Thou knowest how. As a desert dweller Hobab would be well acquainted with its signs and ways and know where to look for water.

32. If thou go with us. Presumably Hobab finally consented to accompany them, for the children of Hobab dwelt among the children of Judah (Judges 1:16; 4:11).

33. Ark of the covenant. That is, of the Ten Commandments (Num. 14:44; Deut. 10:8; 31:9, 25; Joshua 4:7, 18; 6:8). A covenant is an argument. The covenant between God and Israel was the agreement into which both entered, by which they were to be His people, to obey Him and to become His representatives before the world, and by which He on His part would bless them and be their God (see on Ex. 19:5 and 24:7). It was upon the basis of their voluntary choice to accept the role of being God's chosen people that He gave them the Ten Commandments, which they promised to obey as their part of the agreement (Ex. 19:8; 24:3, 7). Appropriately, the Ten Commandments, written by the hand of God upon two tables of stone,came to be called the "covenant" (Deut. 4:13), for they constituted a written copy of the conditions on which the covenant was based. The ark itself, containing the Ten Commandments, therefore, became known as the "ark of the covenant" (see on Ex. 25:16 and Num. 1:50).

35. Moses said. The setting out of the children of Israel on their march to the Holy Land was a demonstration of faith and hope. Upon Moses lay the greatest burden. Verses 35 and 36 record his morning prayer for a good day's journey, and his evening prayer for rest and protection. The apostle Paul speaks of Israel's being "baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

33 PP 375
34-36SR 157
35, 36 Ed 38; PP 376

CHAPTER 11

1 *The burning at Taberah quenched by Moses' prayer.* 4 *The people lust for flesh, and loathe manna.* 10 *Moses complainteth of his charge.* 16 *God divideth his burden unto seventy elders.* 31 *Quails are given in wrath at Kibroth-hattaavah.*

1. The people complained. Literally, they "were as murmurers of evil." That is, evil in the sense of misfortune, unhappiness. The wilderness probably appeared to them to be a deathtrap. Badly frightened by their own imagination, they began to predict all kinds of evils that would befall them there.

Uttermost parts. The mixed multitudes (see on v. 4) were on the fringes of the camp, for the arrangement by tribes (ch. 2) left them no other place.

2. Moses prayed. Moses was a great man of prayer, ever ready to intercede for others (see chs. 12:13; 14:13–19; 16:22).

3. Taberah. This place is mentioned but once more (Deut. 9:22). The site has never been identified. The name comes from a verb meaning "to burn," "to consume," "to exterminate."

4. The mixt multitude. From the Heb. *ha'saphsuph*, a repeating form from the verb *'asaph*, "to collect." The word "riff-raff" has been suggested as an appropriate modern translation. For the identity of these people see on Ex. 12:38 (see also Deut. 29:11; Joshua 8:35).

Fell a lusting. Literally, "had a great craving" (see Ps. 106:14; 78:29).

Israel also wept. This became almost a habit with the Israelites in moments of petulant displeasure (Num. 14:1; Deut. 1:45; 34:8; Judges 2:4; 20:23, 26; 21:2).

Flesh to eat. When the Israelites came out of Egypt they were rich in cattle (Ex. 12:32, 38; 17:3; 34:3; Num. 32:1). But presumably not all the Israelites had large flocks

and herds, and evidently the number they had was not sufficient to provide for a regular flesh diet for all, even if that had been the best thing for them.

5. We remember. Compare Ex. 16:3.

The fish. Common and very cheap in Egypt (Ex. 7:21; Isa. 19:8).

Cucumbers. Refreshing in the hot climates (Isa. 1:8). Such things were, of course, not available in the wilderness.

Melons. Watermelons, a favorite article of food in hot, dry countries. The fish and vegetables mentioned in this verse were the food of the poorer classes in Egypt even as they are today.

6. Our soul is dried away. For the lack of fruit and vegetables that had a large water content, and are particularly refreshing in a hot, dry climate.

Manna. The Hebrew reads: "There is nothing at all for our eyes to fall upon except this manna." Jesus used the manna as a symbol of the spiritual food that is given to us freely from heaven (John 6:30-35, 41–58). The Christian overcomer is promised "the hidden manna" (Rev. 2:17).

7. Coriander seed. Round in shape, light in color (Ex. 16:14), as readily seen as is the bdellium gum (Gen. 2:12) in the light of the desert sun.

8. As the taste. That is, it tasted fresh and appetizing as food newly baked or fried in good oil. It also tasted like wafers made with honey (Ex. 16:31).

9. When the dew fell. The manna fell upon the earth fresh and cool with the fallen dew (see Ps. 78:23–25).

10. Every man. The man of the East makes it a habit to inform the world at large of his grief and mourning. In this instance there is every appearance of a prearranged plan for concerted action, each family crying out aloud, and at the door of their tent.

11. Afflicted thy servant. Moses refers to his appointment as leader of the people, who now exaggerated their trials and so quickly forgot their blessings (see Ex. 33:1–3).

12. As a nursing father. Moses speaks of Jehovah as the Begetter of the children of Israel (Deut. 32:18), His problem children (Hosea 11:1–3), Compare this verse with other expressions of divine care and solicitude (Deut. 1:31; Isa. 40:11; 46:3; Hosea 11:3, 4).

13. Whence. Compare this with the experience of the disciples recorded in Matt. 15:33; Mark 8:4.

14. I am not able. In reality Moses was as unreasonable as the people, for God never left Moses alone nor expected him to supply the camp with food.

15. Kill me. The meaning is "Kill me and be done with it" (see Ex. 32:32; 1 Kings 19:4).

16. Seventy men. These elders (see Ex. 24:1, 9) were leading men of various families (Ex. 12:21; cf. 1 Sam. 4:3; 8:4; 2 Sam. 17:15).

Officers. This is the word used of the Israelite foremen who worked under the Egyptian overseers (Ex. 5:15). The original meaning of the word is "arranger," "organizer," "secretary."

17. Of the spirit. Compare this with the transfer of "the spirit of Elijah" (2 Kings 2:15) to Elisha. Here the gifts and activities of the Holy Spirit are referred to in their energizing of the spirit of man to carry through the plans of God.

18 Sanctify yourselves. A word used with reference to ceremonial cleanliness through ablutions and abstentions (see ch. 19:10, 14) and as a preparation for sacrifice (Gen. 35:2). The same word is translated "prepare," as if for slaughter, in Jer. 12:3. Some

Jewish commentators would give that meaning to it here. In reality the word of itself is neutral, and may mean to prepare for either good or evil.

20. Despised. The original word has the sense of "to reject" (Jer. 6:19; 7:29; 8:9; Hosea 4:6).

23. Waxed short. See Isa. 50:2; 59:1.

25. In a cloud. The same word means "a cloud mass." It is used of such varying circumstances as seen in Gen. 9:13; Ex. 13:21, 22;24:18; Eze. 8:11; 30:3; Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15.

26. That were written. That is, listed among the 70, but not as yet joined to them.

29. Spirit. As God's agent (Gen. 1:2; Judges 3:10; Isa. 11:2; Joel 2:28).

31. A wind. Compare the use of the wind by God in Gen. 8:1; Ex. 10:13, 19; 14:21.

Brought quails. The verb translated "brought" means "to cut off," "to sever," "to separate." The idea apparently is that Jehovah used the wind to separate the flock from their resting place on the seashore, and bring them to camp.

Two cubits. About 31/2 ft. This was an easy height at which to catch the birds.

32. Ten homers. Equal to approximately 62 bu.

Spread. Presumably to dry and cure them.

33. Plague. Throughout the book of Numbers various plagues are the result of disobedience and rebellion (see chs. 16:47; 25:9).

34. Kibroth-hattaavah. This place cannot be accurately identified. The meaning is "the graves of their lusting."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-35PP 379-383
1-6PP 379
4 PP 315
5 1T 129, 131, 137
8 PP 295; 6T 355
11, 13, 14 PP 380
16, 17 Ed 37
16-20PP 380
16-23CD 376
21-28PP 381
24, 25 PP 374
29 PP 382
31-33CD 377; MH 311; PP 382; 3T 171
35 PP 382

CHAPTER 12

1 *God rebuketh the sedition of Miriam and Aaron.* 10 *Miriam's leprosy is healed at the prayer of Moses.* 14 *God commandeth her to be shut out of the host.*

1. Miriam and Aaron. Miriam's name is given first, since she was the leader in the murmuring.

Spake. The verb is feminine, singular number, pointing to Miriam as the instigator. "*She* spake."

Ethiopian woman. Literally, a "Cushite woman" (see on Gen. 10:6). Zipporah's father was actually a Midianite (Ex. 2:16–19; 3:1), and thus a descendant of Abraham (Gen. 25:1, 2 PP 383). Upon rejoining Moses at Mt. Sinai (see on Ex. 4:25 and 18:2),

Zipporah had observed the heavy burdens borne by her husband and expressed to Jethro her fears for his well-being. Thereupon Jethro counseled Moses to select others to share the responsibilities of administration with him. When Moses acted upon this counsel without first consulting Miriam and Aaron, they became jealous of him and blamed Zipporah for what they considered Moses' neglect of them (see PP 383). The fact that Zipporah was a Midianite, though a worshiper of the true God, was used by Miriam and Aaron merely as an excuse for rebelling against the authority of Moses. He did not violate the principle of nonmarriage with the heathen when he took her to wife, as they apparently claimed.

2. Spoken only by Moses. The brother and sister here claim equality with Moses, ignoring the fact that God had placed him in a unique position of authority (see Ex. 4:10–16; Deut. 34:10).

The Lord heard. He hears all complaints against His servants (see Num. 11:1; 2 Kings 19:4; Mal. 3:16).

3. Meek. From a root meaning "humble," "submissive," "lowly." The same word is rendered variously, as "poor" (Job 24:4), "humble" (Ps. 9:12), and "lowly" (Prov. 3:34; 16:19). The trait of character here described as meekness is essential to leadership in the cause of God. Moses was not naturally meek (Ex. 2:11–14); that trait came to him as the result of 40 years spent in the hard school of the wilderness of Midian. Only a meek man knows how to be submissive to God and to his subordinates and at the same time be a courageous and dynamic leader. There is no place in the work of the Lord for a leader who conceives it to be his privilege to domineer over his fellow workers and dictate to them.

6. In a vision. God has ever revealed His will to His servants the prophets through visions and dreams, and promises to continue doing so (Joel 2:28; Amos 3:7). On the basis of Joel 2:28 it has been suggested that "visions" are generally accorded to younger men and women, and "dreams" to those who are older. An "open vision" (1 Sam. 3:1) is a physically exhausting ordeal (see Dan. 10:8–11, 16–19). Various of the prophets speak of experiences similar to that of Daniel. Inspired dreams seem to draw far less on the physical resources of the individual to whom they are accorded.

7. My servant Moses. Similarly described in Ex. 14:31; Deut. 34:5. The term is also used of others (Gen. 26:24; Job 1:8). Compare the reference to these words in Heb. 3:5.

Mine house. Here refers to the people of God (see Heb. 3:2, 5).

8. Mouth to mouth. That is, directly, with no intermediary. This expression is similar to "face to face" in Ex. 33:11; Deut. 34:10.

Dark speeches. Sometimes translated "riddles" (Eze. 17:2).

The similitude of the Lord. Not the actual being of God but some visible *form* that a man could see and appreciate. The word here rendered "similitude" is sometimes translated "likeness" (Deut. 4:15, 16, 23, 25; Ps. 17:15; Isa. 40:18; cf. John 1:18 and 1 Tim. 6:16).

Speak against my servant. The fundamental mistake of Miriam was one of disrespect for, and rebellion against, lawfully constituted authority—in this case, appointed by God Himself. Errors in judgment upon the part of God's leaders today provide no excuse for withholding fromthem one's loyal support. In spite of the fact that Saul sought his life, David remained loyal, in word and in deed, to him as king, saying, "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 6:11). Though

condemning the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, Christ commanded His disciples to cooperate with them as the appointed leaders of the nation (Matt. 23:3). When a person is tempted to inquire concerning some leader in the church, "What shall this man do?" the Lord replies today as He did to Peter, "What is that to thee? follow thou me" (John 21:21, 22, Paul's counsel is explicit. "Dearly beloved," he says, "avenge not yourselves" (Rom. 12:19), and then quotes Scripture, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Every true disciple of the Master today will be loyal to those in authority in the church, even when it may seem that they have erred in judgment (1 Tim. 5:1; Titus 3:1).

10. Leprous, white as snow. Compare with Ex. 4:6; 2 Kings 5:27; 2 Chron. 26:19–21. Aaron received no physical punishment. Evidently the whole outcry was worked up by Miriam, who now received her just deserts.

11. Lay not the sin. In Zech. 14:19 the same Hebrew word is translated "punishment," since it refers to both sin and its punishment.

12. As one dead. That is, condemned to die. She was shut away from others like a criminal.

14. Spit in her face. Among Eastern peoples spittle is supposed to have both evil and good effects (see Deut. 25:9; Job 30:10; Mark 7:33; 8:23). Among certain people even today spittle is supposed to be the means of transferring superhuman powers.

After that. The words of v. 14, that Miriam might return a week from the time leprosy struck her, imply that she was healed immediately (see v. 13), and began the ritual of purification immediately (see Lev. 13:4).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-16PP 383-386
1, 2 PP 383
3 CE 43; FE 508; MB 29; PP 251, 384; 3T 297, 341; 4T 368
5, 7-16PP 385
8 PP 396

CHAPTER 13

1 *The names of the men who were sent to search the land.* 17 *Their instructions.* 21 *Their acts.* 26 *Their relation.*

1. The Lord spake. It is plain from Deut. 1:22 that God here complies with a request made originally by the people.

2. Canaan. Promised to Abraham (Gen. 17:8), to Jacob (Gen. 48:3, 4; Ps. 105:10, 11), and to Moses (Ex. 6:4). God warned the Israelites to obey His laws and not defile the land lest they, like the earlier inhabitants, be cast out of it (Lev. 18:3, 24–28; cf. Eze. 16:29).

3. The commandment. This was given to Moses in "the time of the firstripe grapes" (v. 20), which would date this incident in about the fifth month of the second year after Israel left Egypt.

From the wilderness of Paran. That is, from Kadesh-barnea (Num. 32:8; Deut. 1:19–22; 9:23; Joshua 14:7).

Heads. The rulers of hundreds and thousands (Ex. 18:25), and princes of the tribes (Num. 1:16), were so called. But these were evidently tribal "heads" of a lower category.

16. Jehoshua. This name may have been given to Oshea of the tribe of Ephraim (v. 8) shortly after the children of Israelleft Egypt; otherwise, it is used by anticipation in Ex. 17:9. The name Oshea means "salvation," and Joshua, and abbreviated form of Jehoshua,

"Jehovah is salvation." Bible names are usually significant (see Rev. 2:13, 17; 3:12; 14:1; 19:12, 13, 16; 21:12, 14; 22:4).

17. Southward. Literally, "into the Negeb," the south country of Palestine (see on Gen. 12:9). The spies actually went northward from Kadesh to reach the "south" country. This word, from a root meaning "dry" or "parched," is generally applied to the desert country on the southern border of Palestine. This was a transition area between the southern desert and more arable land to the north, and therefore good for cattle grazing. This area is known by the same name today. In view of the fact that the *Negeb* lay to the south of Palestine, the word came to be the usual Hebrew term for "south," as it is commonly translated in the KJV.

The mountain. The hill country of central Palestine (see on v. 29).

20. Fat. That is, productive (see Neh. 9:25, 35).

21. Wilderness of Zin. This should not be confused with the Wilderness of Sin, near Mt. Sinai (Ex. 16:1). Kadesh was situated in the Wilderness of Zin (Num. 20:1; 27:14; 33:36; 34:3, 4; Deut. 32:51; Joshua 15:1, 3), which was either included in or merged into the Wilderness of Paran (see ch. 13:3).

Unto Rehob. This could have been either the Rehob near the Sea of Galilee, or another, farther north, near the Orontes River.

22. By the south. Into the *Negeb* (see v. 17).

Hebron. A city about 20 mi. south of Jerusalem (Judges 1:10).

Children of Anak. The name is thought by some to mean "the children of the neck," and so to infer that they were a long-necked people. The root word is translated "chain," that is, a chain for the neck (Judges 8:26; Prov. 1:9; S. of Sol. 4:9). The inference is that these people around Hebron were tall, wiry men (see Deut. 1:28; 9:2).

23. Brook of Eshcol. *'Eshcol* means "cluster." The same word appears in Gen. 40:10; Deut. 32:32; Isa. 65:8; Micah 7:1.

27. Milk and honey. A general term of plenty (see on Ex. 3:8; cf. 13:5; 33:3). Palestine was then far less dry and bare than it is today (see on Gen. 12:6).

28. Nevertheless. The word here translated "nevertheless" is one that suggests something impossible to man. Its use here implies their lack of faith and reveals their sin. Had they merely stated the facts of the situation, they would have done all that was required of them, but in giving this word they interposed their private opinion that the task ahead was more than the strength of Israel could accomplish.

29. The Amalekites. Descendants of Esau (see on Gen. 36:12); they were a nomadic tribe of the desert country to the south of Palestine. For their first attack on Israel, see Ex. 17:8–16.

Hittites. Subjects of a powerful empire (see on Gen. 10:15).

Jebusites. A relatively unimportant people in the vicinity of Jerusalem, later conquered by David (2 Sam. 5:6; see on Gen. 10:16).

Amorites. Remnants of a formerly powerful people. They were encountered in the hill country spoken of in Deut. 1:19, 44, and in other places (see on Gen. 10:16).

By the sea. That is, by the Mediterranean.

The coast of Jordan. Along, or literally, "by the hand of" the Jordan (see ch. 2:17).

30. Caleb. Perhaps Joshua was more of a warrior than a public speaker (see ch. 14:6).

32. An evil report. The message given was most disheartening, though not necessarily false so far as the facts were concerned. The word translated "brought up" signifies "to invent," to "spread around." Appearances no doubt seemed to justify the evil report. From a human point of view the conquest of Canaan may have seemed impossible. But God had promised the land to them and commanded them to enter in and subdue it. Their failure to do so at this time reflected doubt as to the power of God to give it to them. Paul's eloquent plea for faith refers to the sad experience in Kadesh-barnea as a lesson fraught with meaning for Christians (Heb. 3:8 to 4:16).

Eateth up the inhabitants. The meaning of the expression thus translated is not clear. It can scarcely refer to the poverty of the land, since it had just been described as flowing with milk and honey (v. 27). It was a contradiction of theirreport that Canaan was a fertile land (v. 27). Reference to the superior physique of the giants would also seem to give the lie to their report.

Men of a great stature. Amos 2:9 describes the Amorites as tall like cedars and strong as oaks.

33. Giants. The word translated "giants" could be from the verb "to fall." The same word is used in Gen. 6:4. This may refer to men who fall by the sword, and so refer to the land eating up the inhabitants (v. 32), or, it may mean men whose giant stature causes the hearts of others to fall through fear (see on Gen. 6:4). The related verb is used to express violent death (1 Sam. 4:10; 14:13).

As grasshoppers. In Isa. 40:22 the same expression is used of men in the sight of God. Such word pictures are common in Semitic languages (1 Sam. 24:14; 26:20; 1 Kings 20:27).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-33PP 387-389; 4T 148-150
1, 2 SR 158; 4T 148
2 PP 387
7 4T 148
17-25PP 387
23-29SR 158
25-274T 148
27 PP 387; 5T 376
28 4T 148; 5T 376
28, 29 PP 388
30 ML 310; 4T 149; 5T 130, 134, 303, 376, 383
30, 31 Ed 149; EW 14
30-33PP 388; SR 159
31 4T 149; 5T 377
32 PP 389
32, 33 4T 148; 5T 377
33 4T 150

CHAPTER 14

1 *The people murmur at the news.* 6 *Joshua and Caleb labour to still them.* 11 *God threateneth them.* 13 *Moses persuadeth God, and obtaineth pardon.* 26 *The murmurers are deprived of entering into the land.* 36 *The men who raised the evil report die by a plague.* 40 *The people that would invade the land against the will of God are smitten.*

1. The people wept. As the spies repeated their doubts to the princes of their respective tribes, the evil report spread throughout the camp.

2. Murmured. One can imagine the wild charges that would be raised against Moses and Aaron and the agitation to elect other leaders who would guide them back to Egypt (v. 4).

4. A captain. They went so far as to appoint a leader to replace Moses (Neh. 9:17).

5. Fell on their faces. Moses and Aaron prostrated themselves in despair at the feet of the entire congregation, yet with their thoughts directed toward God.

6. Rent their clothes. Tearing the garments was an ancient method of expressing profound grief (Gen. 37:29, 34; Job 1:20; cf. Joel 2:13).

8. Delight in us. An expression of God's favor, found in 2 Sam. 22:20, of David; in 1 Kings 10:9, of Solomon; and in Isa. 62:4, of the church.

9. They are bread for us. That is, they will be easy to conquer (see Num. 13:32; 24:8; Deut. 7:16; Ps. 14:4; Jer. 10:25). This expression displayed great faith in God's ability and willingness to carry out His promises.

Their defence. Literally, "their shadow." Joshua and Caleb were probably thinking of the cloud of God above the camp of Israel for their guidance and protection, and thereby suggesting the inability of the gods of the heathen to give protection.

10. Glory of the Lord. The glory that appeared on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:16, 17) and filled the tabernacle at its dedication (Ex. 40:34, 35). The appearance of the holy Shekinah no doubt deterred the people from stoning the two spies.

11. Ere they believe me. Throughout their history the Jews have laid great stress on their descent from Abraham, yet they consistently failed in the very thing for which he was honored of God (Gen. 15:6; Gal. 3:7, 9). This lack of faith is what kept them from entering into God's rest (Heb. 3:19; 4:11).

All the signs. Despite lack of faith in much of the modern world, "signs" in their highest form are a kind of evidence intended to confirm the words of God (see Ex. 14:31; John 12:37).

12. Pestilence. The word denotes a plague or pestilence in general, on both man and beast.

A greater nation. Moses (see Ex. 32:10) would thus become a second Abraham, so realizing all that had been promised to that patriarch (Gen. 12:2; 18:18; Deut. 26:5; Isa. 51:2).

13. Egyptians shall hear. Moses uses these words as an argument with Jehovah in his petition for Israel (see Ex. 32:12; Deut. 9:28; Joshua 7:9; Isa. 48:9, 11; etc.).

14. This land. The reference is to Canaan.

Face to face. Literally, "eye upon eye." Compare with similar expressions in Num. 12:8; Ex. 33:11; Isa. 52:8.

15. As one man. A figure of complete destruction, as of one man by one stroke (Judges 6:16).

Fame of thee. The Hebrew word means "report" or "tidings," either true or false.

17. Power of my Lord. The word "Lord" in this verse is not the one translated Jehovah, as in vs. 16 and 18, and therefore is not printed in small capital letters in the KJV (see on Ex. 6:3; 15:2). Here Moses uses an argument based on the nature of God as revealed on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 34:6, 7).

18. Forgiving iniquity and transgression. Literally, "One who lifts up iniquity and transgression." The word translated "iniquity" means "perversion," "distortion," "twisting;" and "transgression," "rebellion," "defiance," "revolt."

20. According to thy word. The people would yet perish in the wilderness Ex. 32:34),but the prayer of Moses prevented their complete extermination as a nation. In his role as intercessor, Moses was a forerunner of Christ (Ps. 106:23; Jer. 15:1).

21. As I live. The same expression appears in Isa. 49:18; Jer. 22:24; 46:18; Zeph. 2:9. It is used in confirmation of a most solemn statement.

22. Tempted me. The Hebrew word here used means "to test," "to put to the proof," and not "to tempt" in the modern sense. Compare the following use of the same verb translated "prove," meaning "test": Ex. 15:25; 20:20; Dan. 1:12, 14; Mal. 3:10.

24. My servant Caleb. The fulfillment of this promise appears in Joshua 14:6–15; Judges 1:20.

Another spirit. That is, the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the personal spirit of Caleb (see Judges 3:10; 6:34; Isa. 59:19; 61:1).

Followed me fully. This is repeated several times (see Joshua 14:8; Num. 32:11; Deut. 1:36).

25. In the valley. If they should seek to enter the Holy Land through the valley, the Amalekites and Canaanites would defeat them.

Turn you. The people were thus commanded to retrace their steps, in a southeast direction to the Red Sea.

29. Your carcases. Used of the dead bodies of men (Amos 8:3) and animals (Gen. 15:11), here in contempt (see Lev. 26:30; Eze. 6:5).

From twenty years old. It is generally thought that the Levites were excluded from this prediction, because they were not among those numbered from 20 years of age, but from one month (ch. 3:15) or from twenty yearss (ch. 4:3). Moreover, they had had no representative among the spies. This is borne out by the fact that Aaron's son Eleazar, who was evidently over 30 when he became a priest, survived (Joshua 17:4; 24:33).

30. Which I sware. Literally, "which I lifted up my hand" (see Gen. 14:22; Deut. 32:40; Eze. 20:5, 6, 15, 23).

31. Your little ones. Under 20 years of age (see v. 3; Deut. 1:39).

33. Wander. Literally, "be shepherds." (The same original word occurs in Gen. 13:7; 47:3; Ex. 2:17; Isa. 31:4; Jer. 6:3; etc.) The people were to wander about in the wilderness, taking care of their flocks.

Wasted. The word thus translated does not mean "to waste away" or "to rot," but "to be used up," "to be competed," "to be ended." Thus it refers to the complete toll to be taken of those condemned to die. Compare the following verses, in which the same word is translated "is spent" (Gen. 47:18), "had done" (Joshua 5:8), "are ended" (Job 31:40) "is perfect" (Isa. 18:5).

34. Each day. From *yom*, a word rendered variously as "day," "time" (Gen. 26:8), "season" (Gen. 40:4), "age" (Gen. 18:11), "when" (Lev. 14:57), "now" (Deut. 31:21), "a while" (1 Sam. 9:27), "full" (2 Sam. 13:23), "for evermore" (2 Kings 17:37), "long life" (Ps. 91:16), "so long as I live" (Job 27:6), "weather" (Prov. 25:20), and "year" (Ex. 13:10). *Yom*, obviously, was much more flexible in meaning than is our word "day." In common Hebrew usage *yamin*, "days," was often used for "year" (see Ex. 13:10; Lev.

25:29; Num. 9:22; Joshua 13:1; Judges 11:40; 17:10; 21:19; 1 Sam. 1:3, 21; 2:19; 20:6; 27:7; 2 Sam. 14:26; 1 Kings 1:1; 2 Chron. 21:19; Amos 4:4).

The word *yom* is a softened form of *chom*, "heat," from the root *yacham*, "to be warm" (see on Gen. 9:2). Each day was said to be composed of "evening," the dark or "cool" part of the day (Gen. 1:4, 5; 3:8), and "morning," the light part or "heat" of the day (Gen. 1:4, 5; 18:1). Similarly, a year was composed of the cold of winter and the heat of summer (see Gen. 8:22). Thus, with respect to their temperature cycles, a significant characteristic common to both, the day and year resembled each other. In Gen. 8:22 the various expressions, "seedtime and harvest," "cold and heat," "summer and winter," and "day and night" are used in this parallel sense. The first two couplets are the product, or result, of the last two. In the first two, heat follows cold; in the last two, cold follows heat. Note particularly the strict parallelism of the last two couplets, where the heart and cold of the year parallel the heat and cold of the day.

Here (Num. 14:34) occurs the first use of the words "day" and "year" together in a correlative sense, in a prophetic setting. The spies had spent 40 days searching the land of Canaan and had reported unfavorably on prospects for occupying it. In so doing they demonstrated a lack of faith in God's promises and in His power to fulfill those promises, yet their report was accepted by the people (see on v. 4). As a result of this decision the nation was sentenced to 40 years of suffering in the wilderness. The 40 literal days thus became prophetic of 40 literal years—one year of remedial wandering about in the desert for each faithless day spent wandering about in the Promised Land. That this is not an isolated instance of the use of the year-day principle in prophecy is evident from Eze. 4:6, where the same principle is again applied. God specifically told Ezekiel, "I have appointed thee each day for a year," and in so doing confirmed the principle established in Num. 14:34.

My breach. From a verb meaning "to hinder," "to frustrate," "to restrain." It is also translated "disallow" (ch. 30:5, 8, 11); "discourage" (ch. 32:7, 9); and "maketh … of none effect" (Ps. 33:10). They had set themselves in opposition to God and alienated themselves from Him. In order that they might learn to cooperate with God, He ordained that they should experience His opposition, His frustration of their plans.

37. By the plague. Literally, a "stroke." The same word is used of the ten Egyptian plagues (Ex. 9:14), of the plague following the insurrection of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16:48, 49), and of slaughter by the sword (1 Sam. 4:17; 2 Sam. 17:9; 18:7). The type of "stroke" here visited upon the people is not disclosed.

Before the Lord. That is, the "plague" was a divine judgment.

40. The mountain. That is, "the mountain of the Amorites" (Deut. 1:19, 20), or the hilly country of the *Negeb*, to the north of Kadesh-barnea (see on Num. 13:17).

Lo, we be here. An acknowledgment that they were ready to do as Caleb and Joshua had pleaded with them to do (chs. 13:30; 14:9).

41. Wherefore now. God had commanded them to retrace their steps (v. 25), not to advance.

42. Not among you. The ark would not accompany them (Num. 14:44; cf. Joshua 6:8, 9), neither would the cloud go before them.

44. They presumed. A glaring case of foolhardy and presumptuous conduct against the will of God.

The ark. The cloud rested over the tabernacle; therefore Moses made no move to leave the camp, and the Levites did not bear the ark before the people (chs. 9:21, 22; 10:33). Apparently, aside from the Levites, all the other tribes set out.

45. Hormah. Meaning, "devoted to destruction." A city afterward allotted to Judah or Simeon, Hormah is mentioned several times in the Scriptures (Num. 21:3; Judges 1:17; 1 Sam. 30:30). The line of pursuit is given more fully in Deut. 1:44. Its length suggests that the number of wounded and slain was not small.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-45PP 389-394; SR 159-163; 4T 149-154; 5T 377-380
1 5T 377
1, 2 4T 149
1-5PP 389; SR 159
2 PP 391; SR 163; 4T 150
2-45T 377
3 4T 150
4 SR 160; 4T 150
5 4T 149, 151; 5T 377
6 4T 149; 5T 377
6-8SR 175
7-9PP 390; SR 160; 4T 149, 151; 5T 377
9 MH 510
10 EW 14; 4T 151; 5T 378
10-12PP 390
11-16SR 161
12 PK 312; 4T 152
13-164T 152
16 5T 378
17-19PK 313; PP 390; SR 162; 4T 152
19 ML 288
20 ML 20, 288
20, 21 PK 313
20-24SR 162
21 ML 288
23, 24 4T 153
24 PP 391; 5T 303, 378, 380
25 SR 162
26-30SR 163
28, 29 PP 391
29 4T 153
29, 30 FE 508; Te 13; 4T 1538
30 Ed 149; FE 505
31 PP 391; SR 163; 4T 153
33 FE 505; SR 163
34 DA 233; Ev 696; GC 324; PK 698; PP 391; SR 163
36, 37 PP 398
37 4T 153

39, 40 PP 392
41-43PP 393
43-454T 154
44, 45 PP 437

CHAPTER 15

1 *The law of the meat offering and the drink offering.* 13, 29 *The stranger is under the same law.* 17 *The law of the first of the dough for an heave offering.* 22 *The sacrifice for sin of ignorance.* 30 *The punishment of presumption.* 32 *He that violated the sabbath is stoned.* 37 *The law of fringes.*

2. When ye be come into the land. These words make it clear that the legislation here enjoined was not for the wilderness, and that Israel was certain to enter the Promised Land. We presume, therefore, that the reference is not to the entire congregation (ch. 14:31), but to the young people, who were not condemned to die in the wilderness.

3. An offering by fire. That is, any sacrifice burned upon the altar, whether in whole or in part.

A burnt offering. This offering was wholly burned. Each morning and evening a lamb was offered thus for the whole congregation (Ex. 29:38–40; see on Lev. 1:3).

A sacrifice. This is the peace offering, as appears from v. 8 (see Ex. 18:12; Lev. 1:3; 17:5, 8).

In performing a vow. In explanation of "a sacrifice," that is, a peace offering offered in accordance with a vow, of one's free will (Lev. 7:16; 22:21).

In your solemn feasts. Appropriate times for additional offerings (see Lev. 23, and Num. 29:39).

A sweet savour. For the life of the Christian as a fragrance, see on 2 Cor. 2:15.

4. A meat offering. The Hebrew word, which means "present" or "tribute," originally meant any type of sacrifice (see Gen. 4:4). At Sinai it was limited to cereal sacrifices.

A tenth deal of flour. That is, an omer, the tenth part of an ephah (Ex. 16:36), or 2 dry qt. (2.2 l.).

The fourth part of an hin. A little less than a quart.

5. A drink offering. From a root meaning "to pour out" (Jer. 7:18; Hosea 9:4); It is also used of casting metal (Isa. 40:19); the derived noun is translated "graven image" and "molten image" (Isa. 41:29; 48:5; Jer. 10:14; 51:17).

One lamb. If there was more than one lamb, the drink offering and the meat offering were increased accordingly. This was expressly so on a Sabbath day (ch. 28:4–9). No mention is made here of salt; yet it must have been added, since its omission from any sacrifice was forbidden (Lev. 2:13).

6. Or for a ram. This has been regarded as a more acceptable sacrifice than that of a lamb. It had larger accompanying meat offerings and drink offerings, in proportion to the size of the animal.

7. Wine. It is possible that at one time the libation was poured over the sacrifice. Later, it was poured out about the altar (Josephus *Antiquities* iii. 9. 4). A third of a hin would be 21/2 pt. (1.22 l.).

8. For a burnt offering. This was a freewill offering, and was regarded as most acceptable to God. It was not offered in payment of a vow, but simply as a token of love for God.

9. A meat offering. A *minchah*, or cereal offering. Such offerings were increased in proportion to the size of the burnt offerings with which they were offered, so much for a lamb (v. 4), more for a ram (v. 6), and for a bullock, three tenths deal of flour with half a hin of oil.

12. According to the number. The proportions of meat and drink offerings were strictly enjoined and regulated.

13. Born of the country. Homeborn, that is, indigenous Israelites.

14. A stranger. A sojourner (ch. 9:14). The LXX reads "proselyte."

15. One ordinance. That is, for sacrifices.

So shall the stranger be. The Jews later interpreted this as not including a right to the Sanhedrin or in the council in Jerusalem.

16. One law and one manner. This liberal attitude was calculated to encourage foreigners to become proselytes to the Jewish religion and to ensure that they receive kindly treatment at the hands of the Jews.

19. Bread of the land. That is, what the land produced (see Ps. 104:14, 15).

20. A cake. This was not placed upon the altar, but was given to the priests, who were allotted all heave offerings (ch. 18:8). They were called "heave offerings" because they were lifted up in presentation to the Lord as the Creator and Giver of all good things.

23. Lord commanded Moses. The word "Moses" was supplied by the translators. It is not in the Hebrew text. The sense is clearer without it.

24. By ignorance. That is, not planned, or without deliberate intent on the part of the transgressor. The Hebrew word denotes transgressions committed unwittingly (Lev. 4:2).

Without the knowledge of. Literally, "from the eyes of" (see Lev. 4:13), that is, a personal sin not generally known.

25. An atonement. From the same Hebrew word also translated "mercy seat," meaning primarily "to cover." It is significant that the entire congregation seems to be involved in this one person's sin and in the sacrifice made for it. This is emphasized in v. 26.

27. Any soul. Literally, "soul of life," that is, a creature having life.

A she goat. In Lev. 4:28 a famael "kid of the goatss" is specified, no mention being made of age.

30. Presumptuously. Literally, "with a high hand," with express intent (see Deut. 17:12; Ps. 19:13).

Cut off. The sacrificial system provided no atonement for deliberate opposition to the will and commands of God.

31. Despised the word. Compare David's experience in 2 Sam. 12:9; see also Prov. 13:13; 19:16.

32. Gathered sticks. The observance of the seventh-day Sabbath of the creation week was obligatory in the wilderness as in the Holy Land (Ex. 16:27–30), with death as the penalty for profanation (Ex. 31:14, 15; 35:2). In the wilderness, with its warm climate, fires were unnecessary for health, and were not to be lighted on the Sabbath (see on Ex. 16:23; 35:3). This man's act was clearly presumptuous, thereforean illustration of the type of sin spoken of in Num. 15:30.

33. The congregation. That is, probably, to the council of elders, who represented the congregation (Ex. 18:25, 26).

34. What should be done. Unquestionably, the penalty was death (Ex. 31:14; 35:2). But how it was to be inflicted was not then made clear. Moses desired clarification of this point.

35. Shall stone him. This was the penalty for outstanding crimes (Lev. 20:2; 24:14). This man was the first to break the holy Sabbath since the giving of the law, at least so far as the record is concerned.

Without the camp. Probably to avoid ceremonial defilement of the camp (see Acts 7:58; Heb. 13:12).

36. He died. It was his defiant attitude that brought severe retribution. He deliberately broke the Sabbath.

38. Fringes in the borders. Literally, "at the wings" of their garments, referring presumably to the folds (see Matt. 14:36; Mark 6:56). The word translated "fringes" is used of the plate of gold upon Aaron's headband (Ex. 28:36); in Jer. 48:9 it is translated "wings," and in Eze. 8:3 "a lock" of hair.

39. That ye may look. The "fringes" were to be a constant reminder to the people that they belonged to God, and that in dress as in other habits they were to follow the principles He had imparted to them.

40. Be holy. Holiness is not attained by outward observances, such as wearing tassels and ribbons, but only by obedience to God's will.

41. The Lord your God. That is, "Jehovah your God." Twice in this short verse this phrase is given. It may have been so stressed in view of the people's proneness to worship and to serve other gods.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

15 PP 507
30 PK 304
32-35 PP 409
38 3T 171
38-41 1T 524

CHAPTER 16

1 *The rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.* 23 *Moses separateth the people from the rebels' tents.* 31 *The earth swalloweth up Korah, and a fire consumeth others.* 36 *The censers are reserved to holy use.* 41 *Fourteen thousand and seven hundred are slain by a plague for murmuring against Moses and Aaron.* 46 *Aaron by incense stayeth the plague.*

1. Korah. Korah was a descendant of Levi (Ex. 6:16, 18, 21; 1 Chron. 6:37, 38), The Korahites encamped on the south side of the tabernacle, near the Reubenites. The children of Korah were assigned to the ministry of music and song at the sanctuary services (see titles of Ps. 42, 44 to 49, 84, 85, 87, 88).

Dathan and Abiram. The name Dathan is not found elsewhere in the OT. The father of these two men was the son of Pallu, the second son of Reuben (ch. 26:5, 8, 9).

On. This person is never mentioned again. Some have thought this may indicate that he withdrew from the conspiracy, refusing any active part in it.

Sons of Reuben. Dathan and Abiram, princes of the tribe of Reuben, claimed for themselves, as descendants of Jacob's first-born, the right of civil leadership in Israel.

Took men. There is no reason for the supplied word "men." In the Hebrew the object of the verb is not given. Some suggest that "offerings" should be read here in place of

"men." Perhaps it is better to construe the object of the verb "took" as being "certain of the children of Israel," in v. 2.

2. Before Moses. Literally, "against the faces of Moses," that is, openly and defiantly.

Princes of the assembly. These men of the congregation apparently belonged to other tribes as well as to that of Levi.

Famous in the congregation. Or, "chosen from the assembly" (RSV). This probably refers to their being called to public consultations in deliberations on weighty matters.

Men of renown. Literally, "men of name." Men held in high esteem in the church were involved in this insurrection, thereby making it the more serious. Similar expressions are found in Gen. 6:4; 1 Chron. 5:24; 12:30.contrast in Job 30:8, where the expression "children of base men" is, literally, "children of nameless men."

3. Congregation are holy. That is, qualified to be priests. This expression may have reference to the fact that before Moses' time every one might offer sacrifices in his own family. But now this office was confined to one family, and that one enjoyed all the benefits that came from the privilege. It is true, of course, that in asense the whole congregation was holy, in that the people were chosen by God and separated from the surrounding nations (Ex. 19:6; Lev. 20:26). But God had now ordained that the theocratic church should exercise its outward priestly function through the one family that had been set apart for that purpose.

Among them. Particularly, in the pillar of cloud and in the sanctuary. The rebels suggested that aside from Jehovah no other leader was necessary (see Ex. 29:45).

Above the congregation. The word here translated "congregation" is different from the previous one in this verse. The first "congregation" is from the root "to appoint," "to meet by appointment." The noun derived from the verb is almost always translated "congregation," and is often used of an informal gathering of the people. In Judges 14:8 it is used of a "swarm" of bees; in Ps. 68:30, of a "multitude" of bulls. In the second instance rendered "congregation" refers to all manner of gatherings of people, whether for religious instruction, for prayer, for war, or for complaint. It is rendered "assembly" in the RSV.

4. Fell upon his face. Presumably Aaron also prayed, as in ch. 14:5, though it is possible that he took no active part in this prayer by Moses as he prostrated himself before the Lord.

5. Spake unto Korah. Moses rose up from his prayer and addressed Korah as the leader of the group. God immediately answered the prayer of Moses, directing him by His Spirit.

Even to morrow. Literally, "the morning." There was to be no delay, no suspense, beyond that of the rest of the day, to allow them time to think over what they were doing, and to repent and retract if they were so minded.

The Lord will shew. Jehovah would take charge, probably giving some outward sign for which they were to wait.

Who is holy. That is, "who are his." The men who are His are the holy, separated, consecrated individuals, those eligible for the highest service.

To come near. It is possible that the meaning here is to approach the altar to minister there. This expression is commonly used of the priests (Lev. 21:17; Eze. 40:46).

6. Censers. The same Hebrew word is translated "firepans" (Ex. 27:3). The offering of incense was considered one of the holiest of all priestly functions (see on Luke 1:9).

Korah and the men with him were invited to carry out a most important duty of the office to which they aspired.

7. Ye take too much. Note how Moses adopts the words of Korah given in v. 3.

8. Sons of Levi. Since Moses directs his remarks to the Levites, it would appear that a considerable number of them had been influenced by Korah's arguments.

9. A small thing. Rather, "Is it too little for you?" Compare with Num. 16:13; Isa. 7:13. Korah and the Levites in his company already possessed great privileges beyond those of the other tribes, but were not satisfied. They desired to have the same prerogatives as the family of Aaron.

Near to himself. The Levites had already been appointed to the sacred service; therefore, for them to seek the priesthood also was a most flagrant presumption.

11. Against the Lord. The rebellion was not against Aaron, but God (see Ex. 16:8; 1 Sam. 8:7; Acts 5:3).

And what is Aaron? Aaron was God's servant, under God's appointment; so the responsibility was not his.

12. Dathan and Abiram. Having challenged Korah, the leader, and his Levite followers, to a test on the morrow (vs. 5–7), Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the Reubenite conspirators.

We will not come up. These men refused to submit their case to arbitration in court. The expression "to come up" is the Hebrew term for appearing before a court of law (see Deut. 25:7; Judges 4:5). They denied the legal authority of Moses.

13. Milk and honey. The reference is to Egypt as abounding with the good things, in contrast with the barren desert where they now were.

A prince over us. An impudent remark, inferring that Moses exercised autocratic power over them.

14. Put out the eyes. Or, "blind." These words imply that Moses sought to deceive the people. Some have read a literal meaning into the words, as in Judges 16:21with regard to Samson. The former explanation seems more probable here (see PP 399).

15. Very wroth. Or, "exceedingly sad" (LXX). The meekness of Moses could not endure their insolence (see on ch. 12:3).

Respect not. The reference is to the incense the men were about to offer (see Gen. 4:4, 5).

One ass. Compare Samuel's protest (1 Sam. 12:3).

Neither have I hurt. Moses had not practice any kind of oppression whatever; to the contrary, he had not spared himself in doing good.

17. Two hundred and fifty censers. The number of the rebellious princes (v. 2).

Before the Lord. That is, in the court of the tabernacle.

18. Every man his censer. That is, of the company of 250 men.

Put fire in them. Presumably from the altar of burnt offering, which stood in the court (see Lev. 16:12, 13). The men were standing within the court.

19. The glory of the Lord. This is the second special appearance of Jehovah's glory (ch. 14:10), moving out from the most holy place where it usually abode.

Unto all the congregation. This must have been a most amazing spectacle. The unthinking majority of the people were in agreement with Korah.

21. Separate yourselves. The congregation that had assembled at the call of Korah thereby allied themselves with the rebellion and became objects of God's displeasure (see Gen. 19:17, 22; Jer. 51:6, 9).

22. Fell upon their faces. To plead with God (v. 4).

The God of the spirits of all flesh. He who created man body, soul, and spirit cannot but be fully aware of the thoughts a man thinks. God is fully able to distinguish between the guilty and the innocent.

25. The elders. That is, the 70 elders who had been appointed to assist Moses (ch. 11:16). It is evident that Moses had the support of the official leaders of the people.

26. These wicked men. The people are exhorted to instant and complete separation from those in rebellion.

Touch nothing of their's. All the goods of the rebels with their persons were anathema, devoted to destruction, therefore not to be touched (Deut. 13:17; cf. Achan, Joshua 7:1).

Consumed in all their sins. Literally, "swept away with all their transgressions." Compare the similar experience of the Sodomites (Gen. 18:23; 19:15).

27. Dathan and Abiram. Korah is not mentioned, but apparently stood with them, since his name is given in the first part of the verse.

Their little children. The root word translated "little children" means "to take quick steps," "to trip along," and refers to children who are old enough to walk about safely on their own. The same word is used in 2 Chron. 20:13; 31:18. God did not impose this death penalty upon small children. But, as often happens, innocent children suffered for the obstinacy of their elders, who refused to repent or even to heed the warning to flee. Some, at least, of Korah's children survived (Num. 26:11; Ex. 6:24).

28. Of mine own mind. Literally, "from my own heart." Moses had not been governed by personal ambition. There is no word in Biblical Hebrew for "mind" (see Jer. 23:16, 20).

29. The Lord hath not sent me. It is stated more emphatically in the Hebrew: "It is not Jehovah who sent me." For a similar use of the negative placed in the emphatic position see Gen. 45:8; 1 Sam. 6:9.

30. Make a new thing. Literally, "but if Jehovah will create a creation." Moses was asking for an extraordinary manifestation (see Ex. 34:10; Jer. 31:22) that could not be accounted for aside from divine intervention.

Quick into the pit. They were to go down, literally, "alive into sheol," even as they stood there in perfect health. "Quick" is an archaic word meaning "alive" or "living." Sheol is the grave, the place of the dead (see on Gen. 37:35 and Ps. 16:10).

Provoked the Lord. Literally, "despised, considered unworthy" of notice (see ch. 14:23).

31. End of speaking. A remarkable vindication of Moses in that the words werescarcely out of his mouth when God acted to confirm them and vindicate him.

32. Swallowed them up. An instantaneous act of God to prevent the spread of a rebellious spirit that had already perverted the entire congregation.

All the men. This may refer to members of Korah's family, though no mention is made of the young children of his household (see ch. 26:11). Again, it may be speaking of heathen slaves or of Israelites who were followers of Korah.

33. The earth closed. The whole company went down alive as Moses had foretold (v. 30), and the earth closed up again, a remarkable testimony to direct divine intervention.

34. All Israel. Though the people were at a distance, having removed themselves (v. 27), the sound of the convulsion of the earth engulfing the rebels and of the victims' shrieks of fear and dismay, caused them to flee still farther away.

Swallow us up also. Conscious of their previous murmuring and unbelief (ch. 14), and aware of their sympathy for the rebellious faction, they feared they might meet the same fate.

35. A fire from the Lord. From "the glory of the Lord" that "appeared unto all the congregation" (v. 19; PP 401).

37. Eleazar. He was also appointed to officiate at the offering of the red heifer (ch. 19:3). In both instances it was apparently deemed imperative that the high priest avoid ceremonial uncleanness (Lev. 21:10–15).

Out of the burning. From among the burned bodies.

They are hallowed. The censers had been used for offering incense to Jehovah, and had held sacred fire from off the altar (Num. 16:7, 18, 46; cf. Lev. 16:12, 13). Previously they had been but the private property of the princes (Num. 16:6).

38. Sinners against their own souls. Perhaps we should understand this as "at the cost of their own lives" (see Prov. 20:2; Hab. 2:10; Heb. 12:3).

A covering of the altar. The altar of incense was of gold (Ex. 30:3; 37:26); so the reference is apparently to the brazen altar in the courtyard. Yet that altar was overlaid with bronze when it was first made at Sinai (Ex. 27:2; 38:2). This, then, was probably an additional bronze covering to protect the original metal top. The censers of Korah and of the company with him were made of bronze (Num. 16:39). In the time of Solomon censers were made of gold (1 Kings 7:50; 2 Chron. 4:22).

A sign. So also the rod of Aaron (ch. 17:10).

40. A memorial. In explanation of the preceding words, "they shall be a sign" (v. 38).

No stranger. For the transgression of this admonition by Uzziah see 2 Chron. 26:16–19.

As Korah. Lest he meet the same terrible fate.

By the hand of Moses. Moses was the mediator between Eleazar and God (see vs. 36, 37).

41. On the morrow. An amazing example of the willfulness of the heart of man in ignoring the judgments of God occurred the following day.

Murmured. It would be difficult to find a more outstanding example of rebellion after so impressive a demonstration of divine disapproval as had been witnessed.

Ye have killed. The pronoun "ye" is emphatic in the Hebrew. The people apparently attributed the death of the 250 princes to Moses and Aaron, who had suggested that they offer incense in their censers. They may also have felt that Moses and Aaron should have pleaded with God to forgive the princes, rather than call down judgment upon them.

42. Gathered against. Simple murmuring gave place to threats of physical violence (see PP 402).

43. Moses and Aaron came. To receive instruction from God and to rest under His protection.

44. Unto Moses. The LXX adds the name of Aaron. Eleazar may also have stood with them (see on v. 45).

45. Get you up. Referring no doubt to the three men, Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar. In Hebrew "you" is plural.

They fell. Pleading for mercy for people who deserved judgment (v. 21).

46. Said unto Aaron. Moses acted as God's mouthpiece.

Take a censer. The Hebrew is definite,"Take the censer," that is, the one Aaron used as high priest. Incense was a symbol of mediation and intercession (see Ps. 141:2; Rev. 8:3, 4).

Unto the congregation. The incense was regularly offered only at the golden altar within the sanctuary. But now at God's command Aaron carried it among the people without, thereby demonstrating his authority from God, and the power of God working in and through him.

An atonement. There was no time to choose and sacrifice an animal. Atonement was made by means of the incense in the censer, for the plague was already rampant among the people.

47. Ran. That is, from one tribal encampment to another. The plague had broken out everywhere, and people were dying on all sides.

48. Between. As if he were standing before a tide, to prevent it from advancing.

The plague was stayed. Aaron was here a type of Christ, who came down among sinful men and made Himself an offering for them (Eph. 5:2).

49. They that died. Whole families were no doubt wiped out, a terrible example of the evils of rebellion against God's expressed will. This was in addition to those "that died about the matter of Korah"; perhaps, all told, not less than 15,000 people perished.

50. Aaron returned. To replace his censer and join Moses, who was still at the tabernacle.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-50PP 395-405; 3T 343-352
1 3T 343
1, 2 CD 428; PP 395
2 3T 344
3 1T 420; 2T 440; 3T 345
3-5PP 398
5-113T 347
6, 7 PP 398
9-14PP 399
13 3T 345
13, 14 3T 347
16-183T 348
19 PP 400; 3T 354
19-223T 349
21, 22 PP 400
22-303T 349
24 3T 354
24-32PP 400
32 3T 353
33 PP 401
34 PP 402; 3T 350, 357

34, 35 PP 401
36-383T 350
41 PP 402, 405; 3T 351, 357; 5T 66
42-44PP 402
42-453T 352
45 3T 357
45-47PP 402
46 3T 358
46-503T 352
48 EW 99; GW 132; PP 402; 1T 445; 3T 238; 5T 157, 252
49 PP 403

CHAPTER 17

[2]

1 *Aaron's rod among all the rods of the tribes only flourisheth.* 10 *It is left for a monument against the rebels.*

1. Spake unto Moses. Probably soon after the staying of the plague, so that further steps might be taken to root out completely the spirit of rebellion.

2. Speak unto the children of Israel. God still recognized Moses as mediator between Himself and His people.

Every one of them. Not as individuals, but as representatives of each tribe.

Twelve rods. These were the official symbols of the tribal authority vested in the princes. The reference is not to rods or sticks freshly cuts from trees. The same Hebrew word is used of the staff of Judah (Gen. 38:18) and of the rod of Moses (Ex. 4:2). There were 12 tribes in addition to Levi; but there was also a rod for Aaron. Commentators disagree as to whether Joseph was counted as one tribe, or separately as Ephraim and Manasseh, or whether Aaron's rod was in addition to the 12 for the tribal princes.

Write thou. Compare Eze. 37:16. The writing may have been done with some form of ink, or was perhaps cut in. The names of the princes, one for each rod, were placed on the staves.

3. Aaron's name. Inasmuch as there was no prince to represent Levi, Moses inscribed the name of Aaron upon the rod for the tribe of Levi. Aaron alone should hold the high office to which he had been assigned. No other, even of the tribe of Levi, might aspire to that office.

4. Before the testimony. This was apparently in the most holy place (see Num. 17:7–10; Heb. 9:4).

Where I will meet. Literally, "where I meet with you." The very place where God had said He would speak with Moses (Ex. 25:22), and through him to the people.

5. Make to cease. Further grumbling against Aaron would be open defiance of Jehovah.

7. Before the Lord. Literally, "in the presence of Jehovah."

8. On the morrow. Moses had implicit faith in the immediate operation of divine power.

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[2]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Nu 2:2). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Tabernacle of witness. That is, the most holy place (see on v. 4).

Yielded almonds. Here was evidence of God's pleasure. The staff that had been placed there for Aaron could not have received life, germinated, brought forth bud, flower, and mature fruit if God had not imparted to it life and miraculous growth. None could doubt that a miracle had been performed.

9. They looked. That is, examined the rods. Each prince identified his own staff. The evidence was clear.

10. Bring Aaron's rod again. Literally, "Cause the staff of Aaron to return." It was to be returned to the place where the miracle had been performed (Heb. 9:4).

Against the rebels. Literally, "against the children of rebellion" (see 2 Sam. 7:10; Isa. 30:9).

Take away their murmurings. The people would be convinced that to oppose Moses and Aaron would be to set themselves in opposition against God.

That they die not. As God had warned (see ch. 16:21, 45). King Uzziah disregarded the special privilege of the priestly tribe and was stricken with leprosy while he held a censer in his hand (2 Chron. 26:19).

12. Spake unto Moses. A fitting sense of awe and fear entered into the hearts of the people and made them willing to approachMoses as the mediator chosen by God.

We die. The people realized that their future safety depended upon obedience to God's will.

13. Near unto the tabernacle. Anyone, that is aside from the priests (see ch. 16:40). The people now realized that access to Jehovah, the privilege they had sought through Korah (ch. 16:3–5), might be theirs only through the mediatorship of those appointed by God. Also, they no doubt remembered the curse of ch. 14:35, that "in this wilderness they shall be consumed."

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-13PP 403

8 EW 32

CHAPTER 18

1 *The charge of the priests and Levites.* 9 *The priests' portion.* 21 *The Levites' portion.* 25 *The heave offering to the priests out of the Levites' portion.*

And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat *of* it.

1. Bear the iniquity. The priests, as distinct from the remainder of the Levites, were to be responsible for seeing that no unauthorized person approached the tabernacle, thereby defiling it. This would allay the fears of the congregation that in coming near the tabernacle they risked death.

2. Thy brethren also. A reference to the Gershonites and the Merarites, the other two branches of the tribe of Levi.

Be joined unto thee. The verb here translated "joined" is probably the root word of the name Levi (see on Gen. 29:34).

3. Keep thy charge. They were the appointed guardians of the sanctuary.

Not come nigh. This would not refer to the Kohathites (ch. 4:15), but only to the other Levites. The Kohathites were not to handle the vessels when uncovered, nor even to look upon them (ch. 4:19, 20). This prohibition also included the brazen altar Ex. 29:37) as well as the altar of incense, for both were "most holy."

The vessels. Literally, "the furniture." The word translated "vessels" includes all the sacred vessels and furnishings of the sanctuary.

4. Joined unto thee. The priests were to look upon their brethren the Levites as an integral part of the corps of men appointed to serve Jehovah in sacred office, even though in an inferior capacity.

A stranger. That is, anyone who was not a Levite (ch. 1:51).

5. No wrath. The Levites were responsible outside the tabernacle, as the priests were within. The priests were to care for all the holy things, such as the shewbread (the bread of the Presence), the lamps, etc., and to cover them when they were to be moved. The Levites were to see that members of the congregation did not inadvertently or impiously profane the sanctuary.

6. Your brethren the Levites. The Levites were not to seek the office of the priesthood, as Korah had done, but to assist the priests in the ministry of the Lord. But the priests were not to look down upon them, but always bear in mind that they were to be regarded and treated as "brethren."

A gift for the Lord. See chs. 3:12, 41, 45; 8:6, 16, 18.

7. Keep your priest's office. God's workers should be proud of their office and service in the Lord's work, and ever keep them inviolate before God.

The altar, and within the vail. These words are in explanation of the expression "your priest's office." The priests were to offer the sacrifices at the brazen altar in the courtyard and to perform all the sacred duties within the sanctuary itself, such as offering the incense, arranging the shewbread, trimming and lighting the lamps, as well as other duties related to such solemn occasions as the Day of Atonement.

The stranger. That is, anyone other than a priest. Such should not presume to approach the tabernacle with the intention of performing any priestly function.

8. Heave offerings. This is a reference to the contributions, those parts of the sacrifice not burned upon the altar but reserved to be eaten by the officiating priest. Aaron was to be responsible for these.

By reason of the anointing. Some commentators refer to Lev. 8:12, and so read, "because you have been consecrated by the anointing oil." The Hebrew reads literally, "To thee, they are given as a consecrated portion, and to thy sons as a privilege forever" (see Lev. 7:35).

9. Most holy things. To specify the things that appertained to the priesthood and to preserve the distinction between the "holy" and "most holy" things as set forth in Lev. 21:22.

Reserved from the fire. That is, from the altar of burnt offerings. The priests received some things that did not come from the altar, such as the 12 loaves of shewbread, or bread of the Presence (see on Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5–8).

For thee and for thy sons. These portions were to be a partial compensation for their lack of an inheritance among the tribes of Israel.

10. In the most holy place. This is generally thought to refer to the tabernacle in contrast to the outer courtyard. In harmony with the obvious intent of Scripture (Lev. 16:2; Heb. 9:6, 7 the RSV reads "a most holy place."

Every male shall eat it. And none other, as specifically stated elsewhere (Lev. 2:3, 10; 6:17, 18, 29; 7:6).

11. And this is thine. "This" refers to the less holy things.

The heave offering. The breast of the peace offerings was *waved* before the Lord, and the right shoulder (or thigh) was *heaved* before Him (see on Ex. 29:27 and Lev. 7:14). Both became the priests' (Lev. 7:30–34). This was also true of the right shoulder of the ram offered for a Nazirite (Num. 6:19, 20).

And to thy daughters. These gifts were not exclusively for the use of the males (Lev. 10:14; 22:13). The eating was to be done, however, in a clean place (Lev. 10:14) within the camp (Deut. 12:6, 7, 17, 18), and no unclean person was allowed to be a partaker (Lev. 7:20, 21; 22:4).

12. All the best. Literally, "the fat," the fat being a symbol of richness in both food and sacrifices (Deut. 32:14; Ps. 63:5; Ex. 23:18; 29:13, 22; 1 Sam. 2:15, 16). It was also used in reference to the choicest products of the country (Gen. 45:18). Reference is here made to the products as they come from the field, before being processed for use.

The firstfruits of them. This may be a reference to *time,* the first of the crop to mature, but it could also refer to *quality* (cf. "the first of the firstfruits" in Ex. 23:19).

13. Every one that is clean. All members of a priestly family were allowed to eat of the "first ripe" things. Only those under the ban of uncleanness were excluded.

14. Every thing devoted. Anything placed under a ban was completely given to God and could not be redeemed (Lev. 27:1–29; cf. Num. 21:2; Mark 7:11).

15. That openeth the matrix. That which was born first, if a male, was to be the priests'. If a female should be born first and a male next, the male was not to be the priests', since it did not in that case open the womb (Ex. 13:2).

Redeem. Two classes of the first-born that belonged to the priests were to be redeemed, that is, bought back with money: (1) unclean animals, being unacceptable as sacrifices, and (2) human beings.

16. Five shekels. The price set when the first-born were exchanged for the Levites (ch. 3:46, 47). Jews today have a ceremony derived from this redemption, when a first-born son is a month old.

17. Thou shalt not redeem. That is, a redemption sum of money would not be accepted, but the animal itself must be sacrificed. These were clean animals, and only the unclean, which could not be sacrificed, were to be redeemed (v. 15).

Sprinkle. The formula used with peace offerings (Lev. 7:31–33).

18. The flesh of them. Except for the fat portions, which were burned, the entire sacrifice became the priests'.

The wave breast. As this and the right thigh ("shoulder") of the peace offerings became the property of the priests (see Lev. 10:14, 15), so in this case the entire carcass became theirs.

19. A covenant of salt. An indissoluble covenant, one that never decays, a bond of sacred friendship. Salt, itself a preservative, is an appropriate symbol of that which is incorruptible. It is an emblem of a binding alliance, as when two men would eat bread and salt together. Salt was always added to the sacrifices made to the Lord (Lev. 2:13; Mark 9:49).

20. No inheritance in their land. That is, the Levites received no territorial inheritance in the Holy Land as did the other tribes. Aaron himself did not enter into the Holy Land, but this statement is made to him as the representative of the Levites. Certain sacred dues were to take the place of a landed inheritance.

I am thy part. The priests were devoted altogether to God (Deut. 10:9). On their part, the people were to manifest a spirit of generosity toward their brethren the priests, who had not been provided with a landed inheritance (see Deut. 12:12; Joshua 13:14). The priests lived from God's altar and were fed, as it were, at God's table.

21. All the tenth. As a reward for their service the Levites were to receive a tenth part of all produce (vs. 26, 30). In Heb. 7:5 the payment of tithes enters into the argument that the Aaronic priesthood was inferior to the priesthood of Christ.

22. Bear sin, and die. Members of the congregation were not to presume to approach the tabernacle with the idea of engaging in any work of the priesthood or of the Levites, lest they die.

23. Bear their iniquity. If the Levites should allow an unauthorized person to do their work for them, they themselves would suffer the penalty due the perpetrator of the offense.

24. As an heave offering. That the people might be willing to give their tithes to the Levites, these are represented as "an heave offering" unto Jehovah. This does not mean that the ritual of heave offerings was followed, but rather that the tithes were to be offered to God, and that He in turn gave them to the Levites.

26. When ye take. A confirmation to Moses (v. 25) of the words spoken to Aaron (v. 20).

Ye shall offer up. The Levites themselves were to give a tithe of what they received from the tithes of Israel.

A tenth part of the tithe. Literally, "a tithe from the tithe."

27. Heave offering. The Levites' contribution, which was to be made to the priests, was a tenth part of the tithe that was their income.

Reckoned unto you. Compare Lev. 7:18, where the same word is translated "imputed." It is used also of the faith of Abraham (Gen. 15:6, literally, "counted").

As though it were. The Levites had no corn or wine of their own, but were to tithe their income as if it were from their own threshing floor or wine press.

28. To Aaron the priest. Non-Levites were much more numerous than the Levites, nearly 30 to 1 (see chs. 2:32; 3:39). This meant that the Levites were well provided for indeed. It was therefore fitting that as the Levites received tithes from the people, they in turn should pay tithes to the priests.

29. Out of all your gifts. Out of all that came to their hand the Levites were to make their offering to the priests.

Of all the best. Nothing less than the best could be offered to God.

Hallowed part thereof. This was the tithe, the Lord's part (Lev. 27:30).

31. In every place. Not in some designated "holy place."

Your reward. It was under their control, to be used for the home, partaken of by the whole household, or sold to purchase other things (see Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:4; 1 Tim. 5:18).

32. Bear no sin. They would suffer no blame by using it for their own purposes and needs.

Heaved. After they had taken out the tenth part for God.

Pollute the holy things. There would be no pollution, with its attendant penalty, from their putting to personal and non-religious use the remainder of the tithes they had received.

Lest ye die. Literally, "and not shall ye die," as indeed those did who put holy things to a common use.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

12 AA 337; 4T 77
15, 16 PP 277
20 6T 312
21 CS 71, 103; PP 530; WM 275, 277

CHAPTER 19

1 *The water of separation made of the ashes of a red heifer.* 11 *The law for the use of it in purification of the unclean.*

1. Unto Moses and unto Aaron. Both men were concerned with the instruction that follows, Moses as the mediator to give the instruction, and Aaron as the agent to carry it out.

2. The ordinance of the law. The children of Israel were in fear of losing their lives because of ceremonial pollution (chs. 16:49; 17:12, 13). This law is provided to show how they might be purified from pollution.

A red heifer. Symbolically, the red color suggests blood as an instrument of purification; also, fire.

Without spot. Literally, "faultless," "sound," "healthy."

No blemish. No physical defect (see Lev. 22:20–22).

Never came yoke. Since this animal was selected for a special purpose, it must be one that had not been used for ordinary domestic work (see Deut. 21:3; 1 Sam. 6:7).

3. Unto Eleazar. Inasmuch as the sacrifice of the heifer was for a most important matter, no ordinary priest was to kill her. Eleazar was next to Aaron in rank and eventually succeeded him in office. It was not fitting that Aaron, as high priest, should so defile himself and thus become temporarily unfit for his sacred duties (v. 7).

Without the camp. Compare Ex. 29:14; Lev. 4:12, 21; 16:27; Heb. 13:11, 12. As a sacrifice for uncleanness, the animal was to be slain some distance from the sanctuary.

Slay her. Eleazar supervised the sacrifice, but another actually slew the animal. The presence of Eleazar emphasized that it was a sacrifice for God's service, though offered at a distance from the altar of the tabernacle.

4. Sprinkle of her blood. Eleazar took of the blood as in an expiatory sacrifice (Lev. 4:6), and then sprinkled it in the direction of the tabernacle, toward the presence of God.

Seven times. The number of perfection (see Lev. 4:17), and thereby symbolically denoting the perfection of the expiation. The "dead works" of Heb. 9:13, 14 may be a reference to the frequent use of the ashes of the dead heifer to cleanse defilement. "Dead works" are a weight removed by true repentance. There is no spiritual life in them, and one cannot serve a living God with "dead works," the fruitsof spiritual death. "Dead works" must be cleansed by the blood of Christ, and His life accepted as a renewing agency.

5. Burn the heifer. All was consumed to ashes after the sprinkling of the blood (see Ex. 29:14). This is the only sacrifice in which the blood is consumed with the rest of the sacrifice instead of being poured out at the altar. Some have suggested that the reason was the lack of a consecrated place away from the altar, where the earth could receive the blood.

6. Cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet. These very items were used in the cleansing of the leper (Lev. 14:4, 6, 49, 51). Cast upon the still-burning heifer, they were thus mixed with the ashes of the carcass to form ingredients of cleansing. Both cedar and hyssop were credited by the ancients with various medicinal properties. The scarlet thread matched the color of the heifer. Cedar wood was regarded as an emblem of fragrance and incorruption, the hyssop as a symbol of purification. Scarlet was a symbol of sin (Isa. 1:18). In all three there was a typical reference to the shedding of the blood of Christ (see Heb. 9:13, 14).

7. The priest shall wash. Inasmuch as Eleazar had come in contact with the carcass of the red heifer and had touched its blood, he became ceremonially unclean. He was therefore obligated to go through ceremonial cleansing before he returned to camp (see Lev. 16:24).

Unclean until the even. Every detail here enjoined was given to make plain the virulent and fatal effect of spiritual uncleanness. Such details can be properly appreciated only as a foreshadowing of the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross (see Lev. 11:24-27, 31, 39; 14:46; 15; 17:15).

8. He that burneth her. This person was to do exactly as the man who led the scapegoat into the wilderness (Lev. 16:26), but he must remain unclean until evening.

9. A man that is clean. That is, free from ceremonial impurity. He must be another person than the man who burned the heifer.

Gather up the ashes. That is, of the heifer, the cedar, the hyssop, and the scarlet thread, blended together.

Lay them up. For mixing with running water, as needed, to supply water for the cleansing of ceremonial impurity (v. 17). Compare this with the ashes of the golden calf (Ex. 32:20).

It shall be kept. That is, the ashes. The Hebrew word is singular in number.

For a water of separation. That is, for the purification of men who, having become unclean, were separated or banished, as it were, from the congregation. The Hebrew word translated "separation" signifies anything loathsome, such as idolatry or immorality. It is also rendered "filthiness" (2 Chron. 29:5) and "uncleaness" (Ezra 9:11; Zech. 13:1).

10. He that gathereth the ashes. The ashes were a purifying means for the repentant one who used them, but a defiling agent to the one who gathered them together.

Unto the stranger. The law of purity applied also to the non-Israelite. Similarly, the remission of sins through Jesus Christ was also for the "stranger" who was "afar off" (Acts 2:39).

11. The dead body of any man. To touch the carcass of an unclean animal entailed uncleanness till evening (Lev. 11:24). The same was true of one who touched the bed of a person that had an issue (Lev. 15:5). But the longer period of seven days was required in the case of contact with a dead person (see Lev. 21:1; Num. 5:2; 6:6; 9:6).

12. Shall purify himself. Literally, "He shall unsin himself."

With it. That is, with the water of separation. (v. 9).

Third day. Compare ch. 31:19.

13. Defileth the tabernacle. If the polluted person approached the tabernacle without having used the water of separation, he defiled the sanctuary (see Ex. 25:8; Lev. 15:31). If, however, the transgression was done in ignorance, a sacrifice was accepted for an atonement (Lev. 5:3, 6, 17, 18).

14. This is the law. The rule laid down concerning such defilement incurred by contact with a dead person. The Hebrew word here translated "law" is *torah*. Obviously, as here, *torah* does not apply only to the Ten Commandments. As a matter of fact, it has many applications. It isused of the instruction of a mother (Prov. 1:8; 6:20) or a father (Prov. 3:1; 4:2; 7:2), of wise people (Prov. 13:14; 28:4, 7, 9; 29:18), of a poet (Ps. 78:1), and of a wise wife (Prov. 31:26). It is from a verb meaning "to throw," "to shoot," and therefore implies giving direction or instruction to someone.

In a tent. Especially applicable to the time of the wilderness sojourn. Nevertheless, the LXX has "in a house," thus suggesting that the law was to remain in force after the people had settled in the Holy Land.

15. Every open vessel. The lack of a cover was held to expose the contents of the vessel to pollution resulting from death (Lev. 11:32, 33).

16. Slain with a sword. Thus, one who dies a violent death.

A bone. That is, taken from a grave, or unearthed by a beast.

Or a grave. Hence the custom of white-washing the outside of tombs to make them conspicuous (see Matt. 23:27; Luke 11:44).

Seven days. The same period as prescribed if a dead human body was touched.

17. Ashes of the burnt heifer. Literally, "the ashes of the burning of the sin." This indicates that the ashes of the burnt heifer were regarded as having in some respects the virtues of a sin offering. Nothing is said as to the quantity of ashes required. Probably a very small amount was deemed sufficient.

As to the nature and purpose of the "purification" (vs. 9, 17) that was accomplished by the sprinkling of the "water of separation [from uncleanness]" (vs. 9, 21), two questions may be asked: (1) What was the nature of the "sin" (vs. 9, 17) or "uncleanness" (v. 13) thus purified? (2) What was the nature of the act of "purification"?

1. The water was "a purification for *sin*" (vs. 9, 17) contracted by touching a dead person or dead unclean animal, or any part thereof (vs. 11–13), or by entering a house where death had occurred, or by touching a grave (vs. 14–16), whether intentionally or by accident. Contact with death was obviously not an infraction of the moral but of the ceremonial code; yet it is referred to as "sin." In what sense is the word "sin" thus used?

The word here translated "sin" is *chaṭṭa'th*, which means literally "a misstep," "a slip of the foot." Thus, according to Prov. 13:6, "sin overthrows the wicked" (RSV), that is, it trips him up. In the KJV Prov. 19:2 reads in part, "he that hasteth with his feet sinneth," but the RSV, "he who makes haste with his feet misses his way," that is, he wanders from it. *Chaṭṭa'th* also means "blame." In Gen. 43:9 Judah offered to "bear the blame for ever," literally, "be a sinner forever," should he return without Benjamin. He purposed to do his best, but if he failed he would "bear the blame," literally, the "sin," of it.

2. The ceremonial nature of the purification effected by the "water of separation" is evident from its use to "purify" material objects (Num. 31:22, 23). In the case of death the tent itself where the man had died and its contents became unclean and must be purified (ch. 19:14–17). This was certainly not from any moral defilement attaching to them, but solely from ceremonial defilement. Another evidence of the ceremonial nature of the cleansing effected is the fact that after the sprinkling of the water the person still remained "unclean" till nightfall, or even for days afterward (vs. 10-12, 19). The matter of uncleanness, and the purification accomplished by means of the red heifer, took on a

moral aspect only when a person failed to obey the provisions ordained by God in connection therewith. Thus, to fail to make use of the "water of separation" as God had instructed, under circumstances where its use was prescribed, was a grievous offense that shut a man out from the mercy of God (vs. 13, 20).

Running water. Literally, "water of lives," or living water (see Lev. 14:5; John 4:10).

18. Hyssop. In v. 6 the hyssop was burned with the red heifer. Here it is used as an instrument of sprinkling (see Ex. 12:22; Ps. 51:7).

19. The clean person shall sprinkle. A clarification of v. 12.

He shall purify himself. Even after the ceremony the defiled person was still unclean till nightfall.

20. The man that. Verse 20 is a repetition for emphasis (see v. 13).

21. Toucheth the water. As when he put together the ashes and the running water. The Oriental mind even today thinks of a close connection between ceremonial washings and personal holiness.

22. Whatsoever the unclean person toucheth. Everything touched by a person defiled by contact with a dead body became unclean, and anyone touching that thing became defiled until evening. It is evident that inanimate objects could become ceremonially unclean. Great care was taken with respect to the defilement of outward things, in order to impress the people with the need, value, and requirement of inward purity.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-22 4T 120-122
2 4T 120
3, 4 4T 121
13 4T 123
16-19 PP 277
17, 18 4T 121
19 4T 122
20 TM 97

CHAPTER 20

1 *The children of Israel come to Zin, where Miriam dieth.* 2 *They murmur for want of water.* 7 *Moses smiting the rock bringeth forth water at Meribah.* 14 *Moses at Kadesh desireth passage through Edom, which is denied him.* 22 *At mount Hor Aaron resigneth his place to Eleazar, and dieth.*

1. Into the desert of Zin. That is, the desert territory lying on the borders of Edom (see vs. 14, 15).

In the first month. This would be in Abib, later called Nisan, when the grass was still green (see John 6:10). It would be dry by May or June. This was probably the 40th year of the wilderness wanderings (see Num. 27:14; 33:36–38; PP 410), here passed over with no comment.

In Kadesh. The people apparently remained in Kadesh several months upon this occasion, partly because of good pasture and partly because of the death of Miriam.

Miriam died there. No details regarding her death are given, either as to cause or date. She was probably 132 years of age (Ex. 2:4, 7). Aaron, who died a few months later, was 123 (Num. 33:38, 39), and Moses, 120 (Deut. 34:7).

And was buried there. There is no record of an appointed period of mourning, as later for Aaron (v. 29). This was about 4 months before Aaron's death (ch. 33:38), and 11 months before Moses' death. She was the eldest of the three.

2. No water. Thus begins the account of events that led to the exclusion of Moses and Aaron from the Promised Land. Evidently the water provided for them since the miracle at Horeb (Ex. 17:1–7) some 40 years ago had now been cut off. This was brought about by God in order to test the faith of the new generation that had grown up in the wilderness (see PP 411).

Against Moses. Compare Ex. 17:2, 3, where their fathers had manifested the same spirit.

3. The people chode. The word "chode" often means "to oppose noisily," sometimes even with bodily violence.

Our brethren died. The allusion is to the various retributive acts of God as in chs. 11:1, 33; 14:37, particularly to the rebellion of Korah (ch. 16:32, 35, 46). They were apparently thinking of sudden death as preferable to the slow and intensifying torture of thirst.

4. Why have ye brought. Words that reflect the spirit of their fathers (Ex. 17:3).

5. Out of Egypt. They forgot their fathers' sufferings and lamentations in Egypt (Ex. 2:23, 24; 3:17).

6. From the presence. The attitude of the people seems to have become threatening. Moses and Aaron repaired to the sanctuary for counsel and protection.

Fell upon their faces. To ask that their sin of rebellious complaint be forgiven, and that their physical wants be supplied.

The glory of the Lord appeared. This was no doubt visible to the entire congregation, and should have been both a warning to them and a rebuke to their lack of trust in God (see chs. 14:10; 16:19, 42).

7. The Lord spake. That is, from within the glory that appeared as an indication of God's presence.

8. Speak ye unto the rock. Nothing is said in the Scripture as to what was to be done with the rod. Perhaps God intended Moses to raise it in the direction of the rock as he spoke.

9. Took the rod from before the Lord. These words seem to imply that it was Aaron's rod that Moses took. But v. 11 speaks of the rod as belonging to Moses, and Moses' rod was "the rod of God" (Ex. 4:20; 17:9). Although we have no record of a command to the effect that Moses should place his own rod in the sanctuary, it may have been kept there.

10. Gathered the congregation. In harmony with God's instruction (v. 8).

Ye rebels. The very language God had used concerning their fathers (ch. 17:10). But with Moses it reflected personal anger rather than zeal for God, and herein lay his sin.

Must we fetch. The use of the personal pronoun applied by Moses to himself and Aaron indicated a disregard of God, as though these two men would have the people think they could perform a miracle by their own power.

11. Smote the rock twice. Part of the sin of Moses lay in the double striking of the rock, for God had not told him to strike it. In addition, Moses forgot the patience of God in His dealings with the people, which should have been reflected in his own attitude and demeanor. He spoke and acted as if the murmurings were against himself.

Water came out abundantly. God met the situation with an abundant supply of water, in spite of the attitude of Moses and Aaron.

12. Ye believed me not. Here is where Moses failed.

To sanctify me. Lack of faith prevented the exhibition of God's holiness through Moses and Aaron.

Ye shall not bring. The implication is that Moses and Aaron would be removed from their high position by death ere the people entered the Holy land.

13. Meribah. A similar use of the word is found in Ex. 17:7 and Deut. 32:51. The Hebrew root from which the word is formed means "to strive," "to contend," "to agitate," "to quarrel noisily," often with bodily violence.

He was sanctified in them. That is to say, God demonstrated His holiness and power in the merciful act of causing the waters to gush forth in the presence of the people. Further, He meted out judgment even to His favored leaders when they departed from His command.

14. Unto the king of Edom. Moses did not deem it wise to seek entrance into Canaan from the south, owing no doubt to the attitude of the Hebrew host he was leading. The Edomites, whom he approached, were in occupation of the territory that lay to the south of the Dead Sea, westward as far as Kadesh, and southward to the eastern arm of the Red Sea.

Thy brother Israel. As is the custom in the East today, those of blood relation may be addressed as "brothers." The Edomites were the descendants of Esau (Gen. 25:30).

All the travail. Moses thus suggests to the Edomites that, as kinsfolk, they would take a sympathetic attitude toward the descendants of Jacob. The word translated "travail" is from the Hebrew root "to be weary," "to be exhausted." Here it has reference to the difficulties of their long journey, perilous and wearisome, with no settled home of their own.

15. Egypt. The experiences of the children of Israel were well known among the surrounding nations.

We cried. See Ex. 2:23–25; 3:7, 8.

Sent an angel. See Gen. 24:7; Ex. 3:2; 23:20; 33:2. The *Angel* in this case was Christ Himself, the eternal Prince of God's people (PP 366).

Brought us forth. See Ex. 13:21; 14:19.

17. Through thy country. In order to enter the land of Canaan from the east the Israelites must either pass through Edom or make a long detour to the south, and then turn northward.

By the king's high way. This was the main artery of travel east of the Jordan, from Damascus in the north to Ezion-geber on the Gulf of ʻAqaba. Up-to-date maps of early Bible times indicate this trade route. It was along this road that the four kings who attacked Sodom in Abraham's day came from Syria. "The king's high way" was repaired centuries later by the Romans, and its route is still in use. An aerial photograph of part of this roadway appears on page 40 of *The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible.*

18. With the sword. See Gen. 27:40. No doubt the people of Edom were afraid their country would be occupied, or at least despoiled.

19. Without doing any thing else. Moses reiterates the peaceable mind of the Israelites toward Edom and says they would go through "without doing any thing else,"

literally, "it is not a thing," that is, they would not do a single thing other than pass through as quickly as possible.

20. Thou shalt not. Edom feared to allow Israel passage through his territory. He did, however, sell them necessary provisions (see Deut. 2:28, 29).

With a strong hand. The king mustered his troops and made a show of force, manifesting every intention of resisting by force of arms any attempt at passage through his country.

21. Israel turned away. God Himself commanded Israel to turn aside, but to buy needed provisions from the Edomites (Deut. 2:5, 6).

22. Mount Hor. This site has not been definitely located to date. Four different mountains are claimed by different scholars as the Mt. Hor where Aaron died. *Jebel Nebi Harun*, that is, the mount of the prophet Aaron, has a mosque on the supposed site of the prophet's tomb, and is visited by devout pilgrims. This location contradicts the Bible account, which demands a mountain outside the borders of Edom (v. 23; ch. 33:37), whereas *Jebel Nebi Harun* is well within the borders of the country, not far from the ruined city of Petra.

23. In mount Hor. Probably Israel lay encamped at the foot of the mountain.

24. Gathered unto his people. The same expression of death is used of Abraham (see on Gen. 25:8), of Ishmael (Gen. 25:17), of Isaac (Gen. 35:29), of Jacob (Gen. 49:33), and of Moses (Num. 27:13; 31:2).

25. Unto mount Hor. According to Deut. 10:6 Mt. Hor was also known as Mt. Mosera; or it may be that the camp at the base of the mount was known as Mosera.

26. Strip Aaron. A description of the high priest's garments is given in Lev. 8:7–9.

Die there. With the transfer of the garments and the death of Aaron, priestly succession was emphasized.

27. In the sight of all. There could then arise no question as to the legality of the succession of Eleazar to the sacred office after his father's death.

28. Moses stripped Aaron. This Moses did, acting for God according to His command, and as a sign of the transference of the priestly office, which continued despite the death of the holder.

Aaron died there. The date of Aaron's death, and his age, 123 years, are given in ch. 33:38, 39. The death of Aaron emphasized the imperfection of the Levitical priesthood in respect to its changeableness. Paul speaks of the contrast between it and Christ's priesthood in this respect (Heb. 7:24). According to Deut. 10:6, Aaron was buried at Mosera (see on v. 25).

29. Thirty days. This is the same number of days of mourning observed for Moses some months later (Deut. 34:8).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-29PP 414-427; SR 164-169
1 PP 410
2 FE 509
2-5SR 164
3-5PP 414
4, 5 FE 509
6-8PP 417; SR 165

10 PK 174; PP 417, 418, 426, 472; 3T 302; 4T 369
10, 12 FE 509
10-12Te 14
11 PP 417, 426, 472
12 PP 419, 426, 469; SR 166
14-20PP 422
22-24PP 424
25-27PP 425
28 PP 426; 3T 293
29 PP 427

CHAPTER 21

1 *Israel with some loss destroy the Canaanites at Hormah.* 4 *The people murmuring are plaqued with fiery serpents.* 7 *They repenting are healed by a brasen serpent.* 10 *Sundry journeys of the Israelites.* 21 *Sihon is overcome,* 33 *and Og.*

1. King Arad. The name may refer to the place, making the verse read, "And when the king of Arad the Canaanite" (see Joshua 12:14; Judges 1:16; 1 Chron. 8:15). Arad is about 50 mi. north of Kadesh and 17 south of Hebron, and is known today as *Tell 'Arâd*.

By the way of the spies. Rather, "by the way of Atharim." To translate the Hebrew expression by the words "of the spies," is to assume an unjustified philological identity between two words where none exists. Grammatically, a proper noun is required after the Hebrew word for "way," and not a designation of certain travelers who had used the road.

Prisoners. The king apparently cut off a few stragglers in the rear or on the borders of the line of march; for had he attacked the main body in force, there would likely have been some account of battle casualties.

2. Vowed a vow. This is a form of request to Jehovah for help in punishing the king of Arad (see Gen. 28:20; Judges 11:30; 1 Sam. 1:11; 2 Sam. 15:8).

Utterly destroy their cities. Literally, "I will dedicate their cities," using the verb root of the word translated "devoted" in Lev. 27:29. The import of this is that the spoils of those cities should be devoted to God and His service (see Deut. 7:1, 2; Joshua 6:17, 21). When anything was devoted to God it could not be put to secular use.

3. Delivered up the Canaanites. In harmony with their vow, which the Lord accepted, Joshua effected their destruction upon entering the Holy Land (Joshua 12:14).

Hormah. The word means "destruction," in the sense of devoted to God, and therefore not redeemable for man's use. The verb form of the same word is given in v. 2 as "utterly destroy," that is, offer to God as a sacrifice. The name was apparently applied to the city and its environs (Num. 14:45; Deut. 1:44; Joshua 12:14; 15:30).

4. Way of the Red Sea. A detour was made necessary because they had been denied passage through Edom. They were now on their journey to Ezion-geber (Deut. 2:8), with their backs toward the Holy Land. For encampments between Kadesh and the region of Moab see Num. 33:41–44.

Israel's route of march led southward through the *'Araba* to the southern border of Edom, and thence eastward. Finally, turning northward, they passed to the east of both Edom and Moab (PP 428, 433; see note on p. 577).

Because of the way. Literally, "on the way." There were a number of discouraging factors. The part of the country through which they were traveling, the Arabah, is a

barren plain strewn with stones and sand, and usually hot and dry. In addition, they realized they were marching with their backs turned to Canaan, instead of entering it.

5. Brought us up. The form of the Hebrew verb here used is another sign of their growing impatience, being the causal form: "caused us to go up."

No bread. They had an abundance of food, but were rebellious about the monotony of their heavenly diet.

Light bread. The Hebrew word translated "light," which occurs nowhere else in the Bible, is from the root "to be light," that is, to hold in low esteem. The people were thinking of the varied and spicy foods of Egypt.

6. Fiery serpents. Literally, "the serpents, the fiery ones." The word translated "fiery" elsewhere appears as "seraphims" (Isa. 6:2, 6). It is from the root "to burn" (Joshua 11:9; Isa. 44:16; Eze. 43:21). The serpents were called fiery on account of the violent inflammation caused by their bite (PP 429).

Much people of Israel died. The deaths were due to the withdrawal of the protecting hand of God. The part of the country through which they were traveling was infested with snakes, scorpions, etc. (Deut. 8:15); hence, every day provided miracles of divine protection. But now the Lord withdrew His protection and allowed the snakes to attack the people.

7. We have sinned. The people became humble before God, knowing that their accusations against Him were false.

Pray unto the Lord. Compare Job's petition for his friends (Job 42:10).

8. A fiery serpent. A replica of the kind of serpent that was plaguing the people.

Upon a pole. The word translated "pole" is the one used of a military standard. It occurs in Ex. 17:15, Jehovah-nissi, "Jehovah, my standard." Also as "banner" (Ps. 60:4), "ensign" (Isa. 11:10), and "standard" (Jer. 51:27). Whatever it was, the pole was high enough to be seen throughout the camp.

9. When he beheld the serpent. The people knew that the serpent was a symbol of the coming Saviour. They also realized that it was not sufficient simply to look at the serpent, but that the looking must be accompanied by faith, since there was no healing in the serpent itself. It was possible to gaze at the image without being healed, if there was no exercise of faith in God as the divine Healer. Similarly, offerings unaccompanied by faith were unavailing (see John 3:14, 15; PP 430, 431).

10. Pitched on Oboth. Previous to Oboth (ch. 33:41–43) the Israelites had pitched in two other places that Moses does not mention here. The site of Oboth has not been determined.

11. Ije-abarim. Literally, "the ruins of the Abarim." The first word is from the same root as Ai, which means "stone heap," or "ruins." The second means "the other side," and is the one from which we get the word "Hebrews," that is, the ones who passed over from the other side—immigrants from beyond the Euphrates. Accordingly, some would translate Ije-abarim as "the places of the Hebrews" (see on Gen. 10:21).

Which is before Moab. The wilderness of Moab (Deut. 2:8). The Israelites were now going northward.

12. Valley of Zared [Zered]. Literally, the "stream of Zared." Its bed would be dry in the hot season. This word is in use in the Urdu language of India, derived through the Arabic, and applied to the canals of the Punjab. The "valley of Zared" is now known as

the *Wadi el–Hesa*, a stream that enters the Dead Sea at its southeastern corner. Anciently, the Zared divided Edom from Moab.

13. Arnon. The Arnon River flows through the present *Wadi el Mojib*, which is some 1,700 ft. deep and 2 mi. broad, cut into the plateau of Moab. Its gorge is a miniature Grand Canyon.

In the wilderness. The Israelites were still eastward of Moab, in the wilderness of Kedemoth (Deut. 2:26).

Between Moab and the Amorites. The river Arnon rises in the highlands of Arabia and empties into the Dead Sea. The territory of Moab lay to the south of the river, and that of the Amorites to the north (see on Gen. 10:16). The Moabites had been forced south of the Arnon by Sihon (Num. 21:26; Judges 11:22).

14. The book. Like the book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18), this record has been lost.

What he did in the Red sea. More accurately, by a literal translation of the Hebrew, "Waheb in Suphah." Waheb was thename of a town. Suphah, literally, "whirlwind" (as in Job 37:9; Prov. 10:25; Isa. 21:1; 66:15; Hosea 8:7; etc.), perhaps a valley or region where whirlwinds were common (see Deut. 1:1, RSV). Whirlwinds generally came from the south (Job 37:9; Isa. 21:1). The other places mentioned in the context (Num. 21:12–16) lend weight to the suggestion that Suph lay to the north of the Arnon. Some have identified it with *Khirbet Sufa*, some 8 mi. southeast of Mt. Nebo.

15. The border of Moab. The quotations in vs. 14 and 15, from the book of the wars of Jehovah, suggest that the Amorites had forcibly taken these places from the Moabites. The Israelites were probably in Amorite territory and beyond the borders of Moab.

16. Beer. This is the usual Hebrew word for "well" (Gen. 21:19, 25, 30; 26:15; etc.). It has been tentatively suggested that this is the Beer-elim, or the well of Elim (Isa. 15:8).

17. Sing ye unto it. It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of a good well in Eastern countries. Wells were the objects of praise in song, and of violent dispute among men Gen. 21:25; 26:15–22; Judges 1:15; cf. John 4:12).

18. The lawgiver. From the same word translated "sceptre" in Gen. 49:10. This suggests a miracle on God's part. The ground was soft sand. As the 70 elders and the heads of the tribes thrust their staves into the sand, God caused the water to flow abundantly, so as to form a well of living water.

Mattanah. Site unknown. Possibly to be identified with the modern *el–Medei–yineh*.

19. From Nahaliel to Bamoth. On the borders of Moab. Nahaliel, "the wadi of God," which has been tentatively identified with the *Wadi Zerga Ma'in*. Similarly, Bamoth, "heights," may be the same as *Bamoth–baal* (Joshua 13:17, or "the high places of Baal" (Num. 22:41).

20. The country of Moab. Literally, "the field of Moab," probably referring to the region claimed by Moab.

Pisgah. Mt. Pisgah offers a magnificent view across the whole of western Palestine. The name comes from a verb meaning "to cut," "to split"; the related noun means "cliff," and is applied to the broken, jagged edge of the Moabite plateau where it descends steeply toward the Dead Sea and the valley of the Jordan (Num. 23:14; Deut. 3:27; 34:1).

Situated near the northeastern end of the Dead Sea, opposite Jericho, Pisgah is now known as *Râs es–Siyâghah*.

Looketh toward Jeshimon. Literally, "which looks toward the face of the desert." Jeshimon is a noun meaning "waste place," from the verb "to be desolate," and is used of deserts through which Israel journeyed (Deut. 32:10; Ps. 68:7), and of the desolate land north of the Dead Sea (1 Sam. 23:19, 24; 26:1, 3).

21. Sihon. The Israelites were in the wilderness of Kedemoth, which lay on the borders of the kingdom of Sihon (Deut. 2:26). The land of the Amorites was included in the territory promised to Israel. The Amorites were not akin to the Israelites as were the Ammonites, the Edomites, and the Moabites, but were of Canaanite stock (Gen. 10:16; Deut. 1:7, 19, 27). Sihon is called king of the Amorites, as in this verse, or king of Heshbon (Deut. 2:26, 30), or is identified by a combination of the two names (Deut. 1:4; 3:2). Heshbon was the king's residence or royal city.

22. Let me pass through. The Israelites sent a message of peace similar to the one previously sent to Edom (ch. 20:14), although orders had been given to conquer Sihon (Deut. 2:26, 24).

23. Jahaz. Perhaps a city in the plain of Moab, later a part of the territory of Reuben. The exact site is unknown (see Deut. 2:32; Isa. 15:4; Jer. 48:21).

Fought against Israel. The Israelites had been assured they would be victorious (Deut. 2:31). The Amorite people were destined to destruction (Joshua 3:10), and they themselves now invited disaster by coming out intending to destroy God's people.

24. Israel smote him. A heartening victory for Israel, new to warfare, over an enemy who had recently been victorious over Moab.

From Arnon unto Jabbock. Arnon formed the southern boundary of Sihon's territory (v. 13), Jabbok the northern, and the river Jordan the western boundary. On the eastlay the Ammonites. The Jabbok still bears its ancient name in modern Hebrew.

Israel's Campaign East of the Jordan

[3]

[3]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Nu 17:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Was strong. Preferably, "was Jazer," a town on the border between the Amorites and the Ammonites.

25. All these cities. That is, the cities of the Amorites mentioned in vs. 25 to 30.

Heshbon. The royal city, the dwelling place of the king and the seat of his government. The mound *Tell Heṣbân*, 18 mi. east of the Jordan across from Jericho, preserves the ancient name.

All the villages. Literally, "all her daughters," referring to the city of Heshbon as the metropolis, or mother city, and to the villages as her offspring, dependent upon her for their economic and social health.

27. Speak in proverbs. Or, "ballad singers" (RSV). The reference is to the song of vs. 27 to 30 referring to the victory of Sihon over the Moabites. The territory now taken by Israel belonged to the Amorites.

28. A fire. This refers to the conquests by Sihon of the territories surrounding Heshbon, the fire and flames being a symbol of war (see Amos 1:7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5).

29. Chemosh. The god of the Moabites (1 Kings 11:7; Jer. 48:7), to whom human sacrifices were offered (2 Kings 3:26, 27), but who did not deliver his devotees in this crisis.

Given his sons. Meaning that Chemosh was displeased with his worshipers and did not save them from their enemies (see Jer. 48:13).

30. Dibon. There is a modern Diban 3 mi. north of the Arnon (see Jer. 48:18, 22), adjacent to the ancient Dibon, which lies in ruins today. It was here that the famous Moabite Stone was found in 1868.

Nophah. See Judges 8:11.

Medeba. Identified with modern Madeba. Its name appears in the Moabite stone as *Mehedeba*.

31. The land of the Amorites. The territory Israel now occupied on the east side of the Jordan was that of the Amorites, and not of the Moabites, who had been driven from it.

32. Jaazer. The site of Jaazer is not known. Various places have been suggested, but none can be definitely identified. It was not far from Mt. Gilead (2 Sam. 24:5, 6; 1 Chron. 26:31). With the taking of this city Israel completed the conquest of the Amorites.

33. Bashan. Bashan was famous for its fine pasturelands, on which thrived large herds of cattle, and also for its oak forests Deut. 32:14; Ps. 22:12; Eze. 27:6).

Og. A descendant of the mighty Rephaims Gen. 14:5; Joshua 12:4; 13:12).

Edrei. This has been identified with *Edrea* or *Der'a*, some 22 mi. northwest of Bosra. It was apparently the second royal city of Bashan (see Deut. 1:4; Joshua 12:4; 13:12), 30 mi. east-southeast of the Sea of Tiberias, and 30 mi. west of the Hauran range on the southern border of Bashan (Deut. 3:1, 10), near a branch of the Jarmuk. The ruins of the city are buried beneath the modern village. Had Og remained behind his fortified towers, Israel could scarcely have touched him. In the divine Providence he left his fortifications and gave battle in open country.

34. Fear him not. Such an assurance from God was needed on account of the giant stature of the men (Deut. 1:28; 3:11), and the fame of their fortifications.

35. They smote him. After defeating the army of Og, Israel occupied the whole country, except for some parts of it that held out awhile longer. The final conquest was accomplished by Jair, the son of Manasseh, who received the region of Argob as his reward (Num. 32:39, 41; Deut. 3:14).

And his sons. Not mentioned in Deut. 3:3.

Possessed his land. This included some 60 fortified cities in addition to a number of smaller towns (Deut. 3:4, 5; Joshua 13:30). This was given to the half tribe of Manasseh, as already stated (Deut. 3:13; Joshua 13:29, 30; 1 Kings 4:13).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-35PP 427-437
2-5PP 428
3 PP 434
6, 7 PP 429
6-98T 50
8 FE 198
8, 9 PP 430
9 PP 434; 5T 202
16-18Ed 162
33 PP 435

CHAPTER 22

1 *Balak's first message for Balaam is refused.* 15 *His second message obtaineth him.* 22 *An angel would have slain him, if his ass had not saved him.* 36 *Balak entertaineth him.*

1. The plains of Moab. The plains country had formerly belonged to the Moabites. Though the Amorites had conquered it (ch. 21:26), the country retained its original title.

We are not told the month in which the children of Israel pitched their tents in the plains of Moab, but it is generally thought to have been near the end of the 40th year when they set out from the mountains of Pisgah, or Abarim (chs. 21:20; 33:48). The plain has an area of some 60 sq. mi.

On this side Jordan. That is, the east side, opposite Jericho. They did not cross the Jordan until Joshua took command (Joshua 3:1).

2. Balak. Meaning "ravager," "devas tator," from the root "to lay waste," "to ravage." He is mentioned again in Joshua 24:9; Micah 6:5; and in Judges 11:25 without reference to Balaam.

Zippor. Meaning "little bird." The feminine form of the name is Zipporah, the name of Moses' wife. The masculine form does not occur again in the OT unless Zophar (Job 2:11) is a variant spelling of the same name.

Had done to the Amorites. That is, to the Amorite (see on Gen. 10:16) kings Sihon and Og, the most powerful of the Canaanite rulers at the time (Deut. 3:8).

3. Moab was sore afraid. They were not aware of God's command to Israel not to disturb them, and were therefore in dread of being dispossessed of their territory (cf. the attitude of the Egyptians in Ex. 1:12). The fear the Moabites now felt had been foretold (Ex. 15:15).

4. The elders of Midian. Moab and Midian were traditional enemies (Gen. 36:35), but were ready to unite against Israel. It seems that the "elders" were also called "kings" (Num. 31:8) and "princes"(Joshua 13:21). Among the peoples of the East men of age and experience are even today called "elders." The Midianites were descendants of Abraham and Keturah (Gen. 25:2, 4), and were a pastoral people and itinerant traders (Gen. 37:28).

The grass of the field. Literally, "the greenness of the field," meaning every trace of vegetation.

5. Sent messengers. Apparently sent by agreement with the Midianites (see v. 4).

Balaam. From a verb meaning "to swallow up," "to engulf," "to violently destroy."

Pethor. Now definitely identified with Pitru, a short distance from the Euphrates, and to the south of Carchemish. This identification requires that "the river" must be the Euphrates (see Ex. 23:31; Joshua 24:2, 3, 14). According to Balaam's own statement (Num. 23:7) he was from Aram, as the region of Upper Mesopotamia was known (see PP 438).

His people. Literally, "Amaw" (RSV), now definitely identified with the region of the Sajûr Valley, from an inscription on the statue of Idrimi. This valley is situated between Aleppo and Carchemish. The journey from Pitru (see above), a distance of some 400 mi., would require 2 weeks (see PP 438, 439).

A people. An organized nation that 40 years previously had spoiled Egypt and humbled Pharaoh.

Over against me. A constant threat of organized raiding parties. Such a situation naturally made the Moabites most apprehensive.

6. Curse me this people. Balak and his people were believers in the power of the sorcerer and his incantations. Magic, the black art, and devil possession are the natural accompaniments of idolatry.

Too mighty for me. Balak realized he needed more than human help to cope with the apparent power of Israel.

Is cursed. Balak was planning to destroy Israel but was afraid to attempt it in his own strength. He had heard of the effectiveness of Balaam's powers. In ancient times blessing and cursing were both common, as by Noah (Gen. 9:25–27), Isaac (Gen. 27:27), Jacob (Gen. 49), Joshua (Joshua 6:26), and Elisha (2 Kings 2:24). Similarly, Goliath prefaced his combat with David by calling down the curse of his good upon the lad (1 Sam. 17:43). It is folly to seek to explain all the phenomena of heathen magic by assuming it to be merely trickery.

7. Rewards of divination. Moab and Midian were united in this scheme. The rewards of divination and intercession were looked upon as legitimate gain (see 1 Sam. 9:7, 8; 1 Kings 14:3; 2 Kings 8:8). From ancient times one would scarcely approach an eminent person without a present in one's hand (Gen. 43:11, 25, 26; Mal. 1:8).

8. Bring you word. An apostate prophet plays with fire, in the hope of worldly gain. Balaam already knew of the Israelites and of God's attitude toward them (PP 439).

The Lord. Literally, "Jehovah," the sacred name for God. Many commentators find Balaam's use of the word Jehovah most perplexing, for they regard him as a heathen soothsayer. The facts of the case are that Balaam was originally a true prophet of God who perverted his gifts for worldly gain (PP 439). Likewise, Melchizedek and Jethro (PP 136, 247) were representatives of the true God. Laban was a man who at least permitted family idols in his house, yet under certain circumstances God condescended to communicate with him (Gen. 31:19, 24, 30).

9. What men are these? This was not a question for information, for God knew all about them (see Gen. 3:10, 11). It was a disciplinary question designed to arouse Balaam to the dangers of the path upon which he was about to set his feet (see 1 Kings 19:9; Isa. 39:3, 4).

10. Balak. This implies that the stronger partner in the coalition was Balak, king of the Moabites, and that the Midianites were the weaker participants.

12. Thou shalt not. Balaam knew his duty (see on v. 8). He was greedy for gifts, but also knew his curses could not harm Israel.

They are blessed. No human being could reverse the blessing of God and turn it into a curse.

13. The Lord refuseth. Again Balaam uses the name Jehovah, as he did in v. 8. He neglects to inform the messengers of Balak that the children of Israel were blessed of God.

14. Balaam refuseth. The princes naturally misinterpreted Balaam's motives (see on v. 13), and could not give Balak a true report. Too, the may not have been averse to placing the reason for the failure of their mission on Balaam.

15. Princes, more. A typical Oriental approach under such circumstances. Balak supposed that Balaam was holding out for greater respect, which might be shown by sending men of higher rank, and greater appreciation of his services, by an offer of greater rewards.

16. Let nothing. Literally, "do not hold back thyself." The reflexive form of the verb implies that balak understood Balaam's reluctance to be due to a desire for greater recognition and rewards.

I will promote thee. Literally, "honoring thee I will honor thee exceedingly" (see Dan. 2:6).

Whatsoever thou sayest. Not as to rewards, but as to corporation in securing Balak's objective.

18 His house full. Compare the experience of the unnamed prophet in 1 Kings 13:8.

Silver and gold. A reflection of Balaam's thoughts, now set on worldly wealth. Avarice was his besetting sin.

I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God. Literally, "Not am I able to pass by the mouth of Jehovah my God." Such an expression implies personal acquaintance with the God of heaven.

Less or more. Literally, "a thing small or great," meaning "anything at all" (see 1 Sam. 20:2; 22:15; 25:36). Balaam knew that God could control his actions, even though He could not control his thoughts.

19. Tarry ye. He dealt with them as with the first messengers.

That I may know. Balaam already knew what the Lord would say (see v. 12 and on v. 8). He was attempting to deal with God as though He were a weak man susceptible to a change of mind.

20. God came. The divine messenger is again the Almighty Himself.

If the men come. That is, if they called in the morning to hear his answer.

Rise up, and go. The Lord allowed the prophet to do that which he was determined to do. Balaam was not sincerely seeking God's will, for he already knew what it was (v. 12). He was determined on his own course, and sought an appearance of permission.

The word. Balaam knew from this statement that he would not be allowed to curse Israel, and to set out with the messengers of Balak was to receive rich presents and go under false pretenses.

21. Saddled his ass. The ass was then commonly used by people of all ranks, particularly for short distances. Camels were used for longer journeys. She-asses are designated in the Hebrew of Judges 5:10 and 2 Kings 4:22, but the he-ass is spoken of more often (Ex. 4:20; Joshua 15:18; 1 Sam. 25:20; 2 Sam. 16:2; 17:23; etc.) In a number of instances in the OT the saddling of an ass is connected with tragedy (2 Sam. 17:23; 1 Kings 2:40; 13:13).

22. God's anger. In v. 12 God had made known His mind to Balaam. In v. 20 the Lord allowed him to go. This was merely a permissive directive, based not on God's will but on Balaam's self-will. Had the prophet desired God's will the words recorded in v. 12 would have settled the matter. But when a man is rebellious at heart God may permit him to follow his desires and suffer the consequences (see Ps. 81:11, 12; Hosea 4:17).

Balaam is an example of a prophet who prostitutes his calling, seeking to make gain of his divine gift. Accordingly, we read of the "doctrine of Balaam" (Rev. 2:14), the "error of Balaam" (Jude 11), and the "way of Balaam" (2 Peter 2:15).

The angel of the Lord. This often refers to Christ (Ex. 3:2, 14; 23:20, 23; 32:34; PP 311, 366), though it is not always certain that this is so (see Heb. 1:14; PP 67). Here it would seem to be Christ (PP 366; cf. Ex. 23:20).

Stood in the way. Literally, "placed himself in the way."

Adversary. Heb. *śaṭan*, "adversary," or "enemy." Inasmuch as Satan is the great enemy of God and man he came to be called, literally, "the adversary," or Satan (1 Chron. 21:1; Job 1:6; Zech. 3:1). Jehovah stood in Balaam's path as an adversary, not so much because the prophet was determined to follow his own path to destruction, but rather because he was settinghimself up as an opponent of God's chosen people. The

word "Satan," a transliteration of the Hebrew term, is regarded as equivalent in significance and import to the NT word the "devil." He is the enemy of men's souls, bent on their eternal destruction.

His two servants were with him. No mention is made of the prince of Balak being with Balaam. These messengers, men of rank with large gifts in their hands and the promise of more (vs. 15–17), were upset because Balaam had not immediately agreed to accompany them. Anticipating another refusal, they had already set out on their journey back home (PP 441). Balaam was seeking to catch up with them, and thus particularly annoyed at any delay. The two servants do not enter into the picture, even to the extent of assisting their master to control his ass.

23. The ass saw. The two servants were apparently as blind as their master. The Lord opened the eyes of the ass as He did her mouth shortly after.

His sword drawn. Literally, "a weapon of attack," from the verb "to attack," "to smite down" (see Joshua 5:13).

The ass turned aside. There would be fences enclosing the vineyards, but not the fields.

24. A wall. On his journey through the cultivated countryside, the prophet arrives at an enclosed place between two vineyards, a wall on each side with a part between.

25. Thrust herself. By forcibly pressing her body close to the wall the ass is able to get past the angel, who again takes up another position ahead.

Crushed Balaam's foot. In seeking to brush past the angel the ass violently scrapes Balaam's foot between her body and the wall.

26. No way. The ass could not turn either to the right or to the left, nor was she able to turn around to beat a hasty retreat.

27. She fell down. The ass realized the hopelessness of the situation. The prophet, blinded by avarice and anger, could only see stubbornness in her conduct.

28. The Lord opened. The only other instance recorded in the Bible of a creature speaking is that of the serpent in Gen. 3.

29. Mocked me. Literally, "played with me like a child," that is, treated me capriciously and made a plaything of me. The same verb is translated in Judges 19:25 and in 1 Sam. 31:4 as "abuse," in Job 16:15 as "defiled," and in Ps. 141:4 as "to practice" wicked works.

Now would I kill thee. The insincerity of the prophet was exposed. He was setting himself forth as able to destroy a nation by his incantations, yet was helpless to kill his ass. A man could scarcely be more blind than not to feel surprised that an ass should converse with him.

30. Since I was thine. Literally, "from thy existence," that is "ever since you began to ride."

Was I ever wont? "Is this the way I usually act?" The peculiar behavior of the she-ass should have been enough to impress Balaam that something was wrong, for she had never behaved perversely before.

31. The eyes of Balaam. Compare the experience of Elisha's servant (2 Kings 6:17).

He saw the angel. Balaam lacked spiritual sight. His two servants apparently saw nothing. Compare the experience of Paul's companions (Acts 9:7).

Bowed down his head. Not in true repentance for his evil designs, but through abject fear.

32. Perverse. Literally, "reckless." The idea is that Balaam was undertaking a journey on the basis of his stubbornness, and not in harmony with God's will.

33. I had slain thee. The prophet owed his life to the ass he had savagely beaten. The spirit that controlled Balaam was fully evident in his conduct.

Saved her alive. God would have preserved the ass even if He had slain Balaam. Obedience is a virtue in God's sight. Compare the experience of another disobedient prophet's ass (1 Kings 13:24).

34. I have sinned. Perhaps he had in mind his senseless beating of the ass as much as his determined pursuit of the gifts of Balak.

If it displease thee. He knew that the journey was permitted only because of his stubbornness.

35. Go with the men. Compare v. 20,where the same permission was first given, and where God again is identified with the speaker.

36. He went out. Balak went out with a large retinue of chiefs and dignitaries to honor the prophet who, it was hoped, would free the country from fears of invasion.

A city of Moab. Compare ch. 21:15. Ar may be the city here designated.

In the border. Sihon, king of the Amorites, had conquered the land of the Moabites as far as the Arnon. Balak went to the very frontier of his territory to meet the prophet.

37. Earnestly send. A compliment to Balaam, in that Balak did not seek to hide or minimize his anxiety.

Promote thee to honour? See v. 17; ch. 24:11.

38. God putteth in my mouth. Balaam intimates to Balak that he is under restrictions however much he may regret it (see Num. 23:5, 12, 16; 1 Kings 22:14).

Kirjath-huzoth. Literally, "the city of streets." The site is unknown. Some commentators identify it with Kirjathaim (ch. 32:37).

40. Balak offered. In all probability a sacrificial feast to honor Balaam and make for a propitious beginning of operations. Balak thus demonstrated his joy that the prophet had arrived in safety (cf. 1 Sam. 9:23, 24).

41. On the morrow. Literally, "in the morning."

The high places of Baal. Literally, "Bamoth-baal," probably identical with Bamoth in ch. 21:19. The name indicates that it was a heathen sanctuary. It is possible that Balak had the idea that Balaam's curse would be more effective if he saw the Israelites as he cursed them.

The utmost part. It may be that Balaam was able to see the whole of the camp, or, perhaps, only the portions nearest to the hill on which he stood. It is not clear which is intended.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-41PP 438-444
1-4PP 438
5, 6 PP 439
7 PP 438
8 PP 439
11-193T 73
12, 13 PP 439
14-20PP 440
20-25PP 441

26-29PP 442
31 SC 26
31-33PP 442
34 5T 637
34-38PP 443
41 PP 444

CHAPTER 23

1, 13, 28 *Balak's sacrifice.* 7, 18 *Balaam's parable.*

1. Build me here. That is, on the high place, the sanctuary of Baal, where sacrifices were wont to be held and from which the camp of the Israelites was visible. Seven oxen and seven rams. By multiplying the number of sacrifices Balaam thought to placate God. His mind was now thoroughly controlled by heathen concepts of God, that quantity is more important than quality and material offerings more effective than a sincerely obedient heart.

2. Balak and Balaam offered. As a heathen king Balak would perform priestly offices, assisting Balaam. The mockery of it all was not apparent to the prophet—a wicked prophet of God cooperating with a heathen king officiating at a sacrifice to Baal, thinking at the same time that his own God could be placated by that sacrifice.

3. Stand by thy burnt offering. To tend to it.

Peradventure. Balaam could only hope the Lord would condescend to meet him, for he knew that what was in his heart was contrary to God's mind.

High. Literally, "bare," "smooth," "level." The verb root means "to make level," "to smooth," "to plane off," "to make bare." Balaam desired to be alone; he was already on a "high place," where the altars were built.

4. God met Balaam. The infinite patience of God!

Seven altars. Balaam implies that the sacrifices were made to God, and that He should therefore feel reconciled to Balaam's plans and be willing to cooperate with him. Compare 1 Sam. 13:12 for sacrifice as a form of supplication and Hosea 12:11 for God's attitude toward a multiplicity of altars and sacrifices.

5. Put a word in Balaam's mouth. It is a mark of a true prophet to carry the word, or message, of Jehovah (Deut. 18:18; Jer. 1:9). It has been remarked that as God put words into the ass's mouth contrary to nature, He also put words into Balaam's mouth contrary to that prophet's stubborn will.

7. Parable. The Hebrew word refers to a statement given in figurative rather than in plain language.

The king of Moab. A pretense that Balaam had come against his will.

The mountains of the east. Probably a reference to the barren, stony, and mountainous part of Mesopotamia.

8. How shall I curse? This suggests that Balak was asking Balaam to do the impossible. The blessing of God rested upon His people and the curse of man could not prevail against them.

9. From the top of the rocks. Balaam was standing on the mountaintop gazing down upon the camp of Israel (chs. 22:41; 23:3).

Dwell alone. To dwell apart was a symbol of security (Deut. 33:28; Micah 7:14). Furthermore, the people of God were to be separate from the habits and customs of the surrounding nations.

Not be reckoned. Chosen of God, they were to be a people apart (see Ex. 33:16; 1 Kings 8:53). The Jews came to regard themselves as altogether superior to all other nations.

10. Who can count. The Hebrew construction is such as to express great surprise that one would even think to do such a thing. Compare the promise to Abraham (Gen. 13:16) and to Israel (Gen. 28:14).

The fourth part. Jewish commentators see a reference here to the camp of Israel divided into four parts.

The death of the righteous. The sinful avarice of Balaam precluded any such peaceful end for him (Num. 31:8; Prov. 28:9). The children of Israel were "righteous" because Jehovah had made them so, and had chosen them to be His people (Deut. 7:6–8).

My last end. The Hebrew word here translated "last end" often means "posterity" (Ps. 109:13; Dan. 11:4; Amos 4:2). It may be preferable to understand it so here.

11. I took thee to curse. There was no deceit or subterfuge on Balak's part. He did not understand that Balaam had been permitted to come only on condition that he speak the words God would put in his mouth. Of course he had told Balak as much (ch. 22:38), but, like Balaam, who should have known better, the king no doubt thought God could be persuaded to change His mind. Balaam's arrival made it appear to Balak that the prophet himself thought this possible.

Blessed them altogether. The Hebrew is very emphatic: "blessing thou hast blessed." Balaam had not merely refrained from cursing Israel; he positively blessed them.

12. The Lord hath put. Balak, it would seem, should have recognized that Balaam was not free to follow his own evil way, but was subject to the Spirit of God (see ch. 22:35, 38).

13. Another place. Here was an opportunity for Balaam to withdraw, but his greed for worldly gain held him as if in a vise.

The utmost part. Thinking Balaam might be overawed by the vast Israelite camp, Balak hoped that a view of a small part of it might make the prophet more bold. Thus, by means of several moves to various locations, from each of which a portion of the camp of Israel was visible, the entire camp would finally be cursed.

14. The field of Zophim. From a word meaning "to spy upon," "to keep watch upon." The name Zophim means, "the field of the watchers" (see 1 Sam. 14:16; Isa. 56:10; Jer. 6:17; Eze. 3:17). The site of Zophim is not known. It was undoubtedly another "high place" (see Num. 22:41).

Pisgah. A high mountain in Moabite territory, from which much of the surrounding country is visible (Deut. 3:27; 34:1, 2; see on Num. 21:20; 27:12).

Seven altars. The original procedure wasrepeated. In his heart, however, Balaam must have known that he could not reverse the first message from God. But he intended to do everything within his power to earn Balak's favor and promised rewards.

15. Stand here. Literally, "stand yourself thus." Balaam is not showing Balak *where* to stand, but *how* to comport himself. Perhaps Balaam was implying that Balak was, in part at least, to blame for his own previous failure.

While I meet the Lord yonder. Literally, "and I will petition thus." Again the prophet speaks of the *how* of making his petition, and not the *place* from which he did so. Undoubtedly, however, Balaam did withdraw to another place to meet Jehovah.

16. The Lord met Balaam. Again it is Jehovah who meets the prophet.

Say thus. It was impossible for Balaam to speak against Israel so long as they were faithful to God's revelations.

17. What hath the Lord spoken? Balak realized that the message came from God, for Balaam was apparently helpless.

18. Rise up, Balak. This may mean, "Pay attention and listen, Balak." Or again, it may simply mean to stand up in a reverent attitude and listen to the message from Jehovah. The first suggestion is the more probable.

Hearken unto me. The prophet fully realized the import of the message he was constrained to utter, and that without altering a single word. The Hebrew expression suggests not only to listen but to ponder well the import of the message.

19. God is not a man. It seems strange that Balaam did not sense that he was treating Jehovah as if He were altogether a man, to be influenced to change His mind. Such was a purely heathen concept.

Neither the son of man. The word here translated "man" is the generic word meaning any member of the human race; God is not a mere mortal.

Repent. In the sense of grieving over one's doings. The change of location, the additional altars and the sacrifices offered on them, did not convince Jehovah that He had made a mistake in not being influenced by the first location and offerings. It is only a sincere turning away from evil by the sinner that can influence God to withhold due punishment (see Jer. 18:8; 26:3; Mal. 3:6; Rom. 11:29; James 1:17).

20. Commandment to bless. Jehovah had blessed Israel as His peculiar people. The wicked desires of evil men to hurt them would never lead God to reverse Himself.

21. Perverseness. This statement emphatically declares that so long as Israel remained true to God no evil would befall the nation. The word translated "iniquity" denotes wrongdoing, idolatry, false speaking, or any departure from God's will, as that which in the end will prove to be unprofitable. There is a moral relationship between sin and its just due expressed by this word. "Perverseness" stresses the fact that sin has made life something heavy to be borne; it has made of the normal pursuits of life a burden grievous to bear. This word is commonly translated "toil" (Gen. 41:51), "sorrow" (Job 3:10; Ps. 55:10), "trouble" (Job 5:6, 7), "wearisome" (Job 7:3), "pain" (Ps. 25:18), "painful" (Ps. 73:16), and "labour" (Ps. 90:10).

The shout. Literally, "the blast of a horn," sounded as an alarm, or for joy, or in religious fervor (see Lev. 23:24; Ps. 47:5; Jer. 4:19). Possibly here "a shout of joy" is meant.

22. Brought them out of Egypt. Certainly with the object of having them serve Him in truth and righteousness (see Lev. 11:45; 25:38; Num. 15:41).

An unicorn. Probably the "wild ox" (RSV) or the buffalo. It was no doubt a creature of great strength, courage, and of two horns (Deut. 33:17; Ps. 22:21; note the plural, "horns"). The LXX translates this Hebrew word by a Greek term meaning "one horn," thinking it referred to the rhinoceros. Apparently the translators did not notice that other texts (as noted) speak of this animal as having two horns.

23. No enchantment. It was the strength of Israel that the nation was free from the practice of consulting auguries, omens, oracles, and black art in general. Such practices have ever led men astray from God and are strictly forbidden (Deut. 18:10; Jer. 27:9; Eze. 13:6; Hosea 4:12; Zech. 10:2).

What hath God wrought! The gloriousworking out of God's plan for the salvation of His people is beyond human language to express (Ps. 44:1; Isa. 40:21; 52:7–15).

24. As a great lion. The adjective "great" is not in the Hebrew. The noun may also mean "lioness," as well as "lion." As in other Semitic languages and in Eastern religious books, in the OT the qualities of animals are commonly attributed to human beings (Gen. 49:9, 27; Num. 24:8, 9; Deut. 33:20; Jer. 49:19; Micah 5:8).

A young lion. In his strength rising up from his covert to take his prey.

Eat of the prey. A picture of past and future Israelite conquests. In the war against the Midianites, soon after Balaam's visit with Balak, not an Israelite lost his life (ch. 31:49).

25. Neither curse. Balak feared that the blessings of Balaam would be as potent as he had hoped his curses would be.

26. All that the Lord speaketh. Balaam realized that he could not remain silent if the Lord commanded him to bless (chs. 22:20; 23:3, 12).

27. From thence. Renewed hope in the heart of Balak led him to think that a view of Israel's camp from another location might influence Balaam. This was still another opportunity for the prophet to sever connections with Balak and to return home (see chs. 22:6; 23:13; 24:1).

28. Peor. The site of Peor has not been definitely located. The name is used in compounds for various places: Beth-peor (Deut. 3:29; 4:46; 34:6; Joshua 13:20) and Baal-peor (Num. 25:3). Peor was a mountain of Moab, in the vicinity of Pisgah, on which was an altar, or perhaps a temple, to Baal or to some other heathen god.

29. Build me. Here the identical procedure noted in vs. 1 and 14 is repeated. Balak and Balaam were apparently at their wit's end, for despite two previous failures they could think of no other means of obtaining their objective.

30. As Balaam had said. Upon this occasion Balaam did not withdraw to be alone. He made no pretense at working some magical art in secret, but remained with Balak at the altar. The instructions given by Balaam were carried out unquestioningly by Balak. The responsibility was altogether Balaam's.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-30PP 444-449
7-10PP 444
7-23Ed 160
8 GC 529
9 PP 141, 447; 7T 109
10 COL 221; GC 529; PP 447, 451
11-21PP 448
20, 21 GC 529
21 5T 598
21, 23 PP 457
23 GC 529; 2T 274; 4T 276, 368
23, 25, 27-30PP 449

CHAPTER 24

1 *Balaam, leaving divinations, prophesieth the happiness of Israel.* 10 *Balak in anger dismisseth him.* 15 *He prophesieth of the Star of Jacob, and the destruction of some nations.*

1. It pleased the Lord. Balaam was already fully aware of the Lord's pleasure (ch. 23:20).

To seek for enchantments. Twice Balaam had withdrawn himself to seek a visit with God (see ch. 23:3, 15).

Toward the wilderness. That is, toward the camp of Israel on the plains of Moab (ch. 22:1). He did not move from his place by the altars on Peor. As he gazed at the camp of Israel his mind was prepared to receive the message of Jehovah. He knew he could do no other than permit the Spirit of God to come upon him. Professing to be a prophet of God, he must speak God's message.

2. He saw Israel. As they were camped according to God's directions (see ch. 2).

The spirit of God came upon him. On two previous occasions Jehovah had put words into Balaam's mouth (ch. 23:5, 16). The same experience later came to Saul's messengers (1 Sam. 19:20), and to Saul himself (1 Sam. 19:23). When the need arises God may use an evil person to bear a true message. God may speak to a man directly or in a dream (Num. 22:9, 20), or by a messenger (v. 32). In harmony with Balaam's experience here, compare Isa. 48:16; 61:1; Micah 3:8.

Hath said. Commonly used in the prophetic books of the Bible to introduce a divine message (ch. 14:28). There are but three or four exceptions to this rule.

The man. There are several Hebrew words translated "man." The most commonis *'adam*. This word occurs more than 450 times, generally in a generic sense. Another word, *'ish*, is used of a man in contrast to a woman, a husband in contrast to a wife, a master in contrast to a servant, an eminent person in contrast to a lowly one. It stresses individuality. A third word is *'enosh*. It emphasizes inferiority, being from the verb "to be sick," "to be incurable." This word is never used of the Messiah. The final word for man is *geber*, here used by Balaam of himself. As the word comes from a root meaning "to be mighty," some commentators think its use by Balaam indicates arrogance.

Whose eyes are open. Commentators are not agreed as to the meaning of this expression. Many render it, "whose eyes are shut," that is, whose natural physical sight was inoperative, so that he saw nothing with his eyes, but was in a trance. The Hebrew word does not occur elsewhere in the OT. Whether the word is translated as "open" or "shut," in either case the thought is stressed that Balaam's physical sight was superseded by spiritual sight. The eyes remained open but sightless.

4. The Almighty. From *Shaddai*, a word concerning whose exact meaning there has been considerable discussion. "The Almighty" has been adopted as a conventional equivalent in translation, and is uniformly so rendered, perhaps owing to the adoption of the Latin *Omnipotens* by Jerome. Some Hebrew scholars think the name goes back to a root meaning "to be bountiful." If so, the use of this word as a title for God indicates the fullness and richness of His grace. It points to Him also as the One who generously supplies all our needs.

Falling into a trance, but having his eyes open. Literally, "falling down and his eyes uncovered." The words "into a trance" are supplied. The meaning seems to be that he fell down on his face on the ground, but that his eyes remained open. This twofold physical phenomenon implies control by the Holy Spirit. Compare the experience of Saul (1 Sam. 19:23, 24), of Ezekiel (Eze. 1:28), of Daniel (Dan. 8:17, 18; 10:8–19), of John (Rev.

1:17). Some also think of the experiences of Adam (Gen. 2:21) and Abraham (Gen. 15:12) as being similar. Balaam fell asleep, as it were, and God spoke to him while he was in that condition. It is certainly true that in whatever position his body may have been, whether prostrate or upright, his natural senses were held inoperative and his sensory perception was controlled by the Spirit of God.

5. Thy tents. The orderly arrangement of the camp quite overwhelmed the prophet.

6. Spread forth. Literally, "stretch out themselves." Probably a reference to the long lines of tents with wide spaces between. The word translated "river" is also rendered "brook" (Lev. 23:40), "brooks" (Num. 21:14, 15), "stream" (Ex. 7:19), and "flood" (Joshua 24:3).

As gardens by the river's side. Literally, "as gardens by a river." Compare Isa. 58:11, "a watered garden," and Isa. 1:30, "a garden that hath no water." Balaam may have been thinking of the river Euphrates, which to him would be *the* river (see Isa. 7:20; also Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8).

Lign aloes. This tree was not known in Palestine, but was a native of southeastern Asia, whence its wood was exported. Elsewhere in the Bible the word refers to a perfume (Ps. 45:8; Prov. 7:17). Some commentators prefer "palms" or "poplars" to "aloes."

Lord hath planted. Compare Isa. 60:21; 61:3; Ps. 80:8. In the OT, trees are often symbolic of God's people.

Beside the waters. Oriental cedar trees do not usually grow in proximity to streams, but are often spoken of in Scripture as planted by the Lord (Ps. 104:16). Some commentators suggest that the two expressions, "which the Lord hath planted" and "beside the waters," have been accidentally transposed. However this may be, Balaam sets forth, by the use of these metaphors, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the future prosperity that God planned for His people (see Ps. 65:9).

7. Pour the water. The figure is that of a man carrying his pails of water and abundantly watering his garden, a picture of peace and prosperity. Thus it was to be with Israel.

His seed. A reference to the prosperity of Israel in the Promised Land (see Deut. 8:7; 11:11), where they would be as treesplanted by the waters, and therefore prolific in fruit and seed (see Isa. 32:20; 44:4; 65: 22, 23).

Agag. Possibly a general designation for the kings of the Amalekites, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptians, and Abimelech of the Philistines (see on Gen. 20:2). It is possible that Balaam (through the Spirit) had Saul's conquest of Agag in mind as an example of the future greatness of Israel among the nations, if she would but remain true to God (see Gen. 17:6; 35:11; 1 Sam. 15).

Be exalted. The supreme fulfillment of these words came during the days of David and Solomon, prefiguring the coming of the Messiah.

8. God brought him. All the imperial power of Egypt, mercilessly displayed, was unable to hold Israel in slavery when the time came for deliverance (Ex. 13:9; 14:8).

The strength. The same word appears in Job 22:25 as "plenty," and again in Ps. 95:4 as "strength" (see also Num. 23:22). Some translators prefer "horns" instead of "strength," and translate, "horns like unto the wild ox."

The nations. Primarily, the destruction of the seven nations of the land of Canaan.

Pierce them. A picture of complete conquest, with Israel irresistible.

9. He couched. This follows as a natural figure from the expression in v. 8, "He shall eat up the nations his enemies" (see Num. 23:24; Gen. 49:9).

Stir him up. The great beasts of the forests resent being disturbed in their lairs, and are quick to show anger if this occurs.

Blessed. Compare the blessing of Jehovah upon the patriarch Abraham (Gen. 12:3), and that of Isaac pronounced upon his son Jacob (Gen. 27:29).

10. Balak's anger was kindled. Undoubtedly he now realized to the full the deception under which Balaam had come to him.

Smote his hands. An expression of contempt and a sign of great anger (see Job 27:23; Lam. 2:15; Eze. 21:17). He may have thought Balaam in league with Israel and therefore making sport of him (Balak).

Three times. Balak had in mind the labor and expense involved in a threefold repetition of building the altars and offering the sacrifices, and the false hopes that had been raised each time.

11. Flee thou. This was an order to take himself home, as the very sight of him had become distasteful to the king.

The Lord. The heathen king had come to realize that Jehovah was greater than any earthly power that a magician might invoke.

13. What the Lord saith. In these words is revealed the insincerity of the prophet. He had gone to Balak in a spirit of stubbornness and avarice, knowing full well that his presence would raise false hopes in the king's heart.

14. Advertise. An old English word meaning "to counsel," "to inform" (see Ruth 4:4; Isa. 41:28; 44:26).

In the latter days. Literally, "in the end of the days," a common OT expression denoting the far future, especially the days of the Messiah and His kingdom.

16. The words of God. An acknowledgment that the message came from God, and not by the practice of magic (see Amos 3:7; Jer. 23:18, 22).

The most High. First used of God in Gen. 14:18–22, in the story of Melchizedek. Moses also used the title in speaking of the division of the earth among the nations (Deut. 32:8; see Acts 17:26). The Hebrew expression is also found occasionally in the Psalms (Ps. 18:13; 78:35; 89:27). The term is not limited to sacred use, but is found in Gen. 40:17 as "uppermost," in 1 Kings 9:8; 2 Chron. 7:21; Neh. 3:25; and Jer. 20:2 as "high," in 2 Kings 18:17 as "upper," and in Jer. 36:10 as "higher."

17. I shall see him. A Messianic prediction. The host of Israel was before Balaam's eyes, plainly visible from the elevated place on which he stood. The prophet was referring to the One to come whom he could see with his mind's eye but not with his physical sight.

A Star. Often used as the symbol of a great personage (Job 38:7; Isa. 14:12; Dan. 8:10; Rev. 1:20; 2:28; 22:16).

A Sceptre. Compare the prophecy of Jacob (Gen. 49:10). "Sceptre" signifies "rulership," from the root "to smite." It is an instrument for smiting (Ex. 21:20, Heb.), of chastisement of a nation (Isa. 10:24; 30:31) or of an individual (Job 9:34; 21:9). It is also the shepherd's rod (Ps. 23:4; Micah 7:14).

Smite. The conquest of the enemies of Israel is a token of the final destruction of the wicked and the establishing of Christ's eternal kingdom (Ps. 2:9; 149:6–9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15).

18. Edom shall be a possession. Compare Ps. 60:8. This was brought to pass in the time of David (2 Sam. 8:14), but the ultimate fulfillment awaits the establishment of Christ's kingdom (Isa. 63:1–4).

Seir. The ancient name for the land of Edom (see on Gen. 36:6, 20). As the name also of the mountains of Edom it may suggest that the fortified places would not be able to withstand conquest (see 1 Chron. 18:13).

19. Shall have dominion. Though this was immediately fulfilled in David, the ultimate consummation can only be in Jesus Christ (Ps. 72:8).

The city. No city is named. Many Jewish commentators refer it to Rome, using the name "Edom" in reference to the Roman Empire, and the "city" as the imperial capital, Rome.

20. When he looked on Amalek. Presumably not by physical sight, but prophetically, as he stood on top of Mt. Peor (Num. 23:28; cf. Gen. 36:12; Ex. 17:8; Num. 14:25, 43).

Amalek. Many take this to be a general reference to all the enemies of Israel, Amalek being given as a type.

The first of the nations. Eliphaz the son of Esau was the ancestor of the Amalekites (Gen. 36:12). However, the word "first" may have reference to the Amalekites as the first people to attack the children of Israel when they came out of Egypt (Ex. 17:8). The word may be used of either rank or time.

Perish for ever. Destruction was decreed for the Amalekites when they attacked Israel (Ex. 17:14, 16). King Saul was later commanded to execute the sentence (1 Sam. 15:3, 15); and King David inflicted severe losses upon them (1 Sam. 30). They were apparently exterminated in the time of Hezekiah (1 Chron. 4:42, 43; see also on Gen. 36:12).

21. The Kenites. These people, relatives of Jethro, were connected with the Midianites (Judges 1:16; Num. 10:29). They were also closely connected with Judah (Judges 1:16; 5:24; 1 Sam. 27:10).

Thy nest. A play on the word *ken*, "nest," in relation to "Kenites." This statement is also symbolic of reliance on human might and help (Obadiah 3).

22. Wasted. Little by little the Kenites were to diminish, despite their secure dwelling place.

Shall carry thee away. This may refer to action by Assyria against a tribal remnant of the Kenites (2 Kings 16:9).

23. Who shall live? Compare with Joel 2:11; Mal. 3:2. When God uses one nation to punish another, then the will of God is carried out, whether the nations involved recognize Him or not (Isa. 10:5–15; Dan. 4:30; 5:1–4).

24. Chittim. *Kittim*, from the ancient Greek *Kition* (Latin *Citium*), once a capital of Cyprus (see on Gen. 10:4; see also 1 Macc. 1:1). This same expression also occurs in Dan. 11:30 (see also Jer. 2:10; Eze. 27:6).

Asshur. It is generally held that Asshur and Eber together represent the great powers of the East. However, the exact meaning of Eber is uncertain, though some apply it to the Hebrews. For the application of Asshur to the Persian Empire see 1 Macc. 1:1, which refers to the conquests of Alexander the Great. Persia later conquered the territory of Assyria.

25. Returned to his place. See v. 11. Upon arriving at his home he conceived a scheme by which the downfall of Israel might be brought about (see ch. 31:16), and

returned immediately to Moab to lay his plan before the king (PP 451). He died soon after in battle (ch. 31:8).

Balak also went his way. Perhaps to Kirjath-huzoth, as in ch. 22:39.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-25PP 449-452
1, 2 PP 449
3, 4 PP 442
4-6Ed 161
5-7PP 449
9 GC 529; PP 449
10, 11 PP 450
12, 13 PP 451
16-19Ed 161
17 DA 60; PK 684; PP 451, 475
20-22, 25PP 451

CHAPTER 25

1 *Israel at Shittim commit whoredom and idolatry.* 6 *Phinehas killeth Zimri and Cozbi.* 10 *God therefore giveth him an everlasting priesthood.* 16 *The Midianites are to be vexed.*

1. In Shittim. Literally, "acacia trees." Inasmuch as the word here is in the plural and, in Hebrew, has the definite article with the preposition "in" or "among," the expression may be translated, "Among the acacia trees." It is from here that Joshua subsequently sent men to spy out the land of Canaan in the vicinity of Jericho (Joshua 2:1; 3:1). The more complete form of the name is Abel-Shittim (Num. 33:49). Its site, though not definitely known, is in the plains of Moab.

Whoredom. Literal whoredom was followed by its spiritual counterpart—the worship of idols. If the first step had not been taken, the second one would probably not have followed.

2. They called the people. That is, the Moabite women called the Israelites. Participation in the sacrificial feasts in honor of heathen gods was a natural sequel to literal whoredom (see Deut. 12:5, 7, 17, 18; Judges 9:27).

The people did eat. That is, of the sacrificial feast in honor of the god (see Ps. 106:28).

Bowed down. That is, the Moabite women and the Israelites they had invited. In thus eating of the sacrificial meal and bowing down to the heathen god they proclaimed themselves to be his followers (see Ex. 34:15).

4. Hang them up. The chiefs of the tribes, if guilty, were to be executed. Their position among the people and their participation in idolatry made them primarily responsible. Just what form the punishment took is difficult to say from the Hebrew. The same verb is used in Gen. 32:25 of the dislocation of Jacob's thigh, except that here the causative form of the verb is used. It appears also in 2 Sam. 21:6 for the execution of Saul's seven sons. Many commentators think the form of punishment here referred to was hanging or impalement.

Before the Lord. Probably in front of the tabernacle of the Lord, whose worship they had forsaken. There was no offering for sin such as theirs (Heb. 6:4–6; 10:26); therefore their own blood was shed to pay the penalty for their transgression.

Against the sun. Literally, "in sight of the sun," that is, publicly, as a warning to the entire camp (see 2 Sam. 12:12; Jer. 8:2).

Turned away. By so drastic a course the judges (see v. 5) would prove their zeal for God and His worship.

5. The judges of Israel. Probably the 70 elders (Num. 11:25; cf. Ex. 18:12). There is no record of the execution of the command to slay the partakers of the idolatrous feast.

Every one his men. Each chief or elder would carry out the sentence upon those under his authority and for whom he was responsible (see Ex. 18:25, 26; 32:27).

6. A Midianitish woman. Moab and Midian were apparently collaborating in the plot to destroy Israel. This woman was introduced for immoral purposes (see ch. 31:16).

In the sight of Moses. In deliberate disrespect for the authority of Moses.

7. Phinehas. See Ex. 6:25. He was apparently the only son of Eleazar, and would succeed his father in the office of high priest (1 Chron. 9:20).

He rose up. See Ps. 106:30.

Took a javelin. This word is always translated "spear" or "spears" elsewhere in the OT, except once as "lancets" (1 Kings 18:28) and once as "buckler" (1 Chron. 12:8).

8. The tent. The word here translated "tent" is not used elsewhere in the OT, and its meaning is therefore somewhat uncertain. It may refer to the inner part of the main tent, to which the women of the household would retire. Others suggest that it may refer to special tents erected by the Israelites when they joined with the Moabites and Midianites in the idolatrous worship of Baal.

So the plague was stayed. The indignation of Phinehas, translated into action, pleased the Lord (v. 11), and the plague was stayed. The zealous indignation of Phinehas became an example for later generations (1 Macc. 2:26; 4 Macc. 18:12).

9. Twenty and four thousand. Compare the 23,000 of 1 Cor. 10:8. The difference may be explained by the words "fell in one day." Or, a thousand were perhaps slain by the judges on another day and so not included in Paul's round number of those that "fell in one day."

10. The Lord spake. After so deplorable an event Moses probably went into the sanctuary for communion with God.

11. Turned my wrath away. Compare Ps. 106:23; Jer. 18:20.

Zealous for my sake. Literally, "he was jealous of my jealousy." His zeal culminated in action, to restore honor to God's name and people. In his zeal for God's name he was a fitting type of Christ (Ps. 69:9; John 2:17).

That I consumed not. That is, by the plague then sweeping through the ranks (see 1 Kings 18:19; 19:10; 2 Kings 10:16).

12. My covenant of peace. Literally, "my covenant, peace" (Isa. 54:10; Eze. 34:25; 37:26; Mal. 2:5). Undoubtedly this promise of peace included divine protection for Phinehas from the avenging wrath of the kinsmen of Zimri (see v. 14). Peace comes with a proper standing with God.

13. An everlasting priesthood. The original recipients of God's covenant were the men of Levi (Jer. 33:21; Mal. 2:4, 8), owing, perhaps, to their zeal on a former occasion (Ex. 32:25–29). Christ on thecross made sure all the blessings of the covenant of peace to His spiritual seed (Ps. 89:28, 29). In due course Phinehas succeeded Eleazar as high priest (Judges 20:28). It is presumed that because of some outstanding sin that is not mentioned in the divine record, there was a temporary break in the succession in the time

of Eli. The succession was restored to Zadok, a descendant of Phinehas, by King Solomon, and so continued in that family until the Greek period.

Made an atonement. Compare ch. 16:47.

14. Zimri. This defiant sinner was a prince of the tribe of Simeon. For other instances of the name see 1 Kings 16:9; 1 Chron. 8:36. *Zimri* is derived from the word for chamois (Deut. 14:5).

15. The daughter of Zur. Compare ch. 31:8, where Zur is named as one of the five Midianite kings slain by the Israelites. Both Zimri and Cozbi were of prominent families, but this did not deter Phinehas, whose zeal for God made him lose sight of any personal danger that might have followed.

16. The Lord spake. How much time elapsed before the command was given by God, we are not told.

17. The Midianites. The Midianites had collaborated with the Moabites in the campaign of evil against Israel. As descendants of Abraham they should have manifested a different attitude toward God's people. The Moabites did not completely escape due punishment, but, presumably because of the promise made to Lot (Deut. 2:9) or because their cup of sin was not yet full (see Gen. 15:16), they were passed over for the time being. Eventually, the Moabites were shut out even to the tenth generation from the congregation of Jehovah (Deut. 23:3, 4).

18. Beguiled you. By means of their women, at the evil suggestion of Balaam (ch. 31:16).

In the matter of Peor. By the worship of Baal-peor, into which they were inveigled by the women's invitations to sacrificial feasts and the licentious rites that followed.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-18PP 453-461
1-3PP 454, 684
1-5AH 326
8, 11-13, 15PP 455

CHAPTER 26

1 *The sum of all Israel is taken in the plains of Moab.* 52 *The law of dividing among them the inheritance of the land.* 57 *The families and number of the Levites.* 63 *None were left of them which were numbered at Sinai, but Caleb and Joshua.*

2. Take the sum. A similar command had been given to Moses and Aaron in chs. 1:2 and 4:1, 2. Aaron was now dead, and his son Eleazar now shares with Moses the responsibilities of leadership. In the first census a man was appointed of each tribe, as head of his father's house, to cooperate with Moses and Aaron in the numbering of the people. Though such arrangement is not mentioned here, a similar plan was no doubt followed. The census of the people was to be the basis for dividing up the Promised Land (ch. 26:53). As yet, the children of Israel are on the steppes of Moab (ch. 22:1).

Their fathers' house. The tribal relationship of a child based on paternal descent (see ch. 1:2).

3. The plains of Moab. The first census had taken place in the wilderness (ch. 1:1).

4. From twenty years old. The previous census had been taken 38 years before, and those numbered were now dead (v. 64).

5. Reuben, the eldest son. Literally, "Reuben, the first-born" (see Gen. 46:8, 9; Ex. 6:14; Num. 1:20; 1 Chron. 5:3).The four names listed in vs. 5 and 6 were distinguished families within the tribe of Reuben, and agree with the other lists in the references given.

7. The families. Translated "kindreds" in Ps. 22:27.

They that were numbered of them. The children of Reuben are nearly 3,000 less in number than they were 38 years previously (see ch. 1:21). The considerable decrease may have been due in part to the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram, who were Reubenites (ch. 16:1).

8. The sons. Plural, even though there was but one son. It was the correct formula to use even though it did not fit this precise instance (see also Gen. 46:23; 1 Chron. 1:41; 2:7; and Num. 26:36).

9. When they strove. See ch. 16:1–11.

10. A sign. A reference to ch. 16:38, where it is said that the personal censers of these men became a "sign." The meaning here of the word thus translated is that of conspicuousness, in order to attract attention and constitute a warning. The general meaning is a "standard," or "flag."

11. The children of Korah. They continued to have a good name even in David's time, and did not perish as did the descendants of Dathan and Abiram. The Korathites, a subdivision of the Levites, constituted one of the temple choirs. Compare the inscriptions to Ps. 42, 44–49, 84, 85, 87, 88.

12. Sons of Simeon. Compare the lists of Gen. 46:10; Ex. 6:15. Only Ohad is here omitted, perhaps because he had no children and his family had died out. In the lists of Genesis and Exodus, Nemuel is called Jemuel, and Jarib is called Jachin; but the form Nemuel is retained in 1 Chron. 4:24. With the passing of years the spelling of some names changed slightly, a common occurrence in most languages.

13. Zerah. Presumably the Zohar of Gen. 46:10 and Ex. 6:15.

Shaul. The son of a Canaanitish woman (Gen. 46:10).

14. Simeonites. A decrease of 37,100. They were given a portion of Judah's inheritance (Joshua 19:9).

15. Zephon. This name appears as Ziphion in Gen. 46:16.

16. Ozni. In Gen. 46:16, spelled Ezbon.

17. Arod. Arodi in Gen. 46:16.

18. The children of Gad. Some 5,000 less than at the previous census (ch. 1:25).

19. Er and Onan died. See Gen. 38:7–10 for the account of their death.

20. The sons of Judah. Compare Gen. 46:12.

Shelah. The son of Judah by the daughter of Shuah (Gen. 38:2–5).

Pharez. Pharez and Zerah were twin sons of Judah by Tamar (Gen. 38:29, 30).

21. Hezron. Judah had five sons, but Er and Onan died without offspring. Hezron and Hamul take their places (Gen. 46:12).

22. The families of Judah. The tribe of Judah was more numerous than any other. Aside from Caleb the old generation was dead, but the new exceeded the old in number by nearly 2,000 persons (see ch. 1:27).

23. Tola. The names Tola and Pua are both those of dyes. "Tola" was the cochineal insect from which scarlet dye is obtained, and "Pua," a species of madder, an herbaceous climbing plant with yellow flowers from which a dye was made. The family of Tola was most prolific, numbering 22,600 men in the time of David (1 Chron. 7:2).

24. Jashub. In Gen. 46:13 he is, for some reason, named Job.

25. The families of Issachar. Nearly 10,000 more than at the first census (ch. 1:29; 2:6).

26. Zebulun. There was no change in the list of families of Zebulun since they entered into Egypt (Gen. 46:14).

Elon. A Zebulonite by this name is found among the judges (Judges 12:11).

27. Zebulunites. Their numbers had increased greatly. Their gain was over 3,000 above the first census (ch. 1:31).

28. Joseph. Compare Gen. 46:20.

29. Sons of Manasseh. In ch. 32:39 the land of Gilead is given to Machir by Moses. Here, the terms of genealogy allude to that fact. Machir had no son, so the Machirites were afterward called Gileadites as well as Machirites. Their inheritance is mentioned in Joshua 17:1, 2.

30. Jeezer. In Joshua 17:2 it is given as Abiezer.

31. Shechem. For Shechem and Shemida (v. 32) compare Joshua 17:2.

33. Zelophehad. Compare Num. 27:1; 36:11; Joshua 17:3.

34. The families of Manasseh. This tribe registered an increase of more than 20,000 (ch. 1:35). Compare the prophecy of Jacob concerning the fruitfulness of the children of Joseph (Gen. 49:22).

35. Ephraim. The younger brother of Manasseh is mentioned next. Ephraim held the standard under which Manasseh encamped and marched (ch. 2:18).

Shuthelah. He is mentioned again in 1 Chron. 7:20.

Becher. Listed in 1 Chron. 7:20 as a clan with the name Bered.

Tahan. Perhaps Tohu of 1 Sam. 1:1.

37. The sons of Ephraim. In the previous census (ch. 1:33) they numbered 8,000 more than now.

38. Benjamin. This tribe, like that of Manasseh, was also under the standard of Ephraim. There were altogether seven families, of which five were named after sons, and two after grandsons. When the sons of Benjamin went into Egypt there were ten of them (Gen. 46:21), but here in Num. 26:38, 39 there are but five. Five had either died or left no offspring. Time had brought changes in the spelling of their names, and the genealogies in some places are difficult to reconcile.

Bela. Bela and Ashbel are named as in Genesis.

Ahiram. The Ehi of Gen. 46:21, and Aharah of 1 Chron. 8:1.

39. Shupham. He and his brother Hupham appear in Gen. 46:21 as Muppim and Huppim, in 1 Chron. 7:12 as Shuppim and Huppim, and in 1 Chron. 8:5 as Shephuphan and Huram.

40. Ard and Naaman. These two grandsons of Benjamin, the sons of Bela, became separate families in Israel. One of these grandsons was named after Ard his uncle, the youngest son of Benjamin, called Addar in 1 Chron. 8:3.

41. The sons of Benjamin. The record shows an increase of more than 10,000 above the previous reckoning (ch. 1:37).

42. Shuham. In Gen. 46:23 he is called Hushim; a variation in spelling, as is common in all languages. This is often true today with foreign names found in the United States. In the Bible such changes are by no means confined to the names of people. They may be found with trees, such as the almug of 1 Kings 10:11, 12, which is algum in 2 Chron. 2:8.

The names of cities have likewise changed, an example being Joshua's burial place, Timnath-serah in Joshua 24:30, but Timnath-heres in Judges 2:9.

44. Asher. Compare Gen. 46:17, where Jesui appears as Isui.

46. Sarah. In Gen. 46:17 the spelling Serah is given. The Hebrew root means "princess."

47. The sons of Asher. This tribe reported a sturdy growth, being nearly 12,000 more than the census of ch. 1:41.

48. Naphtali. The names of Naphtali's four sons have undergone no change since the record of Gen. 46:24.

50. The families of Naphtali. These are 8,000 less than the census of ch. 1:43.

51. The children of Israel. The census shows that the people numbered but 1,820 less than the census of ch. 1:46, taken 38 years previously.

53. Unto these. That is, the numbered families of the preceding verses. The Levites were not included.

An inheritance. The land of Canaan was to be apportioned to these families and never alienated from them. The extent of the territory received depended upon the number of persons in each tribe, and each inheritance would bear the name of the tribal ancestor.

54. Thou shalt give. Spoken to Moses, but not fully carried out until the whole of Canaan was taken (Joshua 13:15–23; 14:1–5). Therefore the words mean that Moses was to pass on the Lord's command.

55. Divided by lot. Decision by lot is a method of going back to very ancient times. It was an established belief that the lot was decided by divine intervention, as noted in Prov. 16:33. The same method was used at times in the early church (Acts 1:23–26).

According to the names. Presumably the names were placed in a common receptacle and drawn out one at a time, as lots were called. Sometimes an adjustment of territory, depending upon the number ofpersons in a tribe, was made (Joshua 19:9, 47).

57. Levites. The census of the Levites was taken separately, as also at the first census (ch. 1:47).

58. Libnites. Thought to be connected with Libnah in southern Judah. The Libnites were descendants from Libni, the eldest son of Gershon.

Hebronites. Descended from Hebron, a son of Kohath (Ex. 6:18; Num. 3:19). It would seem natural to connect these people with the city called Hebron, near Libnah.

Mahlites. A daughter or a family of Zelophehad is named Mahlah in v. 33, but the Mahlites and Mushites were from the two sons of Merari called Mahali and Mushi (Ex. 6:19; Num. 3:20).

Korathites. See on v. 11. The Korathites are mentioned a number of times later on, in 1 Chron. 9:19 as doorkeepers, and in 2 Chron. 20:19 as choristers.

60. Nadab, and Abihu. See Lev. 10:1; Num. 3:4.

62. Were numbered. Compared with their number in the census of ch. 3:39 the count of the children of Levi showed an increase of 1,000.

64. Not a man of them. Compare Num. 14:23, 28, 29; Deut. 2:14, 15.

65. Caleb. God had promised to spare Caleb and Joshua, and allow them entrance into the land of Canaan on account of their courageous report (ch. 14:24, 30, 38). With these two men were Moses and Eleazar, as survivors of the first census, which was taken at Mount Sinai.

A generation had perished, aside from a few persons, under God's protecting care, whom He had destined for greater things. Jehovah knows who are His (2 Tim. 2:19), ever keeping the names of His saints before Him (Ex. 33:17; Isa. 43:1) in the book of life (Rev. 3:5; Phil. 4:3). Caleb stands as a worthy example of loyalty to principle under the most adverse and trying circumstances.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

64, 65 PP 456

CHAPTER 27

1 *The daughters of Zelophehad sue for an inheritance.* 6 *The law of inheritances.* 12 *Moses, being told of his death, sueth for a successor.* 18 *Joshua is appointed to succeed him.*

1. The daughters of Zelophehad. First mentioned in ch. 26:33, and here mentioned again in connection with the laws of inheritance (see Joshua 17:3).

The son of Joseph. The daughters of Zelophehad traced their ancestry back to Joseph, and sought an inheritance in the land their forefather loved and requested as his final resting place (Gen. 50:25).

Mahlah. The daughter of Hammoleketh (1 Chron. 7:18).

Noah. Compare Neah, a place name (Joshua 19:13).

Hoglah. A town named Beth-hogla is mentioned in Joshua 15:6.

Milcah. Another person by the same name was Milcah, daughter of Haran and wife of Nahor (Gen. 11:27–29).

Tirzah. Also a place name, the capital of Israel in the reign of Baasha and his immediate successors (1 Kings 15:21). In cases such as these, where a town or city is also the name of a person, if would be natural to expect that the person bearing the name, or his descendants, had some connection with the place, either in founding it or as owning property there.

2. The door of the tabernacle. Evidently it was a custom for Moses, Eleazar, and the princes assembled as a jury (Ex. 18:25, 26), to meet at the door of the tabernacle. This would mean that Moses, should occasion arise, might easily approach and consult with God.

3. Our father died. Perhaps the sisters had drawn up a petition to be read to the assembled jury. They began by drawing attention to the fact that their father was included among those spoken of in ch. 26:64, 65 who had already reached their 20th year when they came out of the land of Egypt.

Not in the company. Their father, Zelophehad, was a Manassite. The fact that he was not, but apparently, then, might have been, in the company of Korah, suggests that members of various tribes participated in that revolt. Inasmuch as their father had not provoked the divine anger upon that occasion (ch. 16:11), the daughters felt that they should receive an inheritance.

Died in his own sin. That is, personal sin of which all were guilty and not a sinof open defiance or of willful neglect. For the mistakes of the fathers the children could in no wise be held accountable (Num. 16:27–30; Eze. 18:20).

Had no sons. The daughters were legitimate issue, and therefore felt that an inheritance portion should be granted them. Compare the experience of Absalom, who had no male issue (2 Sam. 18:18). Unless further provision were made, their family name and line would die out. Even if they should marry and have sons to perpetuate their family name, they would have no property to pass on to the sons.

4. A possession. They were pleading for a share of land along with others descended from Manasseh. Then the name of their father could be perpetuated—by a son of one of them taking the name of his mother's grandfather, Hepher (v. 1). A general law to this effect was afterward adopted (Deut. 25:6).

5. Moses brought their cause. The decision of the court assembled was considered inadequate to settle the matter. Inasmuch as Moses alone did not wish to make the decision, he referred the matter to God, as he had been commanded on various occasions (Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89).

7. Speak right. Jehovah approved the cause of the daughters of Zelophehad. The case came up again after the entry into Canaan (Joshua 17:3–6).

Give them. In Hebrew the word "them" is masculine, referring to the prospective offspring. The daughters were considered representatives of their own expected sons.

The inheritance of their father. The daughters stood in the place of their deceased father and were therefore heirs to his portion. They presented their claim, and received their father's portion when Canaan was divided (Joshua 17:2, 3).

8. If a man die. This case was made a precedent, and a formal statute was drafted to meet similar cases in the future.

9. If he have no daughter. In vs. 9–11 we find the formal statement of the amendment to the law of inheritance based on the precedent of the case of the daughters of Zelophehad. Dispute between brethren in respect to property can be the cause of great bitterness (Luke 12:13).

12. Abarim. The word *'Abarim* is in the plural, and probably refers to the range of mountains that form the western rim of the Moabite tableland. Pisgah is an alternate name for Abarim, or refers to the northern section of the range (Deut. 3:27; 34:1). Mt. Nebo is a peak in the northern section (Deut. 32:49; 34:1). From the verb "to cross over," the noun means "ford," a place suitable for crossing over a stream. Thus the mountains were named *'Abarim*, literally "fords," because of being situated by the fords across the Jordan River opposite Jericho (cf. Num. 21:11).

See the land. From the elevation of Nebo he commanded a full view of the land of Canaan spread beneath his feet (Deut. 3:17; 34:1–4). Moses already knew that he was not to enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:12). The privilege of seeing Canaan was in answer to his prayer (Deut. 3:24–27).

13. Gathered unto thy people. Seen on Gen. 15:15; 25:8. The vicinity of Nebo was to be his temporary place of burial.

As Aaron. God had spoken to Moses and Aaron upon Mt. Hor (ch. 20:23, 24).

14. Ye rebelled. Compare ch. 20:1, 12, 24. The sin of Moses and Aaron recorded in ch. 20:8–13 is here called rebellion.

15. Moses spake. The stature of Moses as a leader is seen in the fact that he lost sight of himself and began to plan for God's people.

16. Let the Lord. Compare ch. 16:21. God is fully acquainted with the spirit, or disposition, of all men, and well able to evaluate a person's fitness for service.

Over the congregation. To assume the office and authority that Moses was about to lay down.

17. Go out. The expressions "to go out" and "to come in" are used to denote the ordinary experiences of life (Deut. 28:26; 31:2). To cause to go out and to cause to come in suggest the relationship of the shepherd to his flock (John 10:3–9). For the thought of

sheep without a shepherd, see 1 Kings 22:17; Eze. 34:5; Zech. 10:2; 13:7; Matt 9:36; Mark 6:34.

18. Take thee Joshua. Joshua had been in close attendance upon Moses (Ex. 24:13), and was therefore acquainted with his administration.

In whom is the spirit. Literally, "inwhom is spirit" (see v. 16). The reference here is to the richness of spirit necessary, held in the fear of God and under the control of the Holy Spirit, who alone can fit man for responsibility in the Lord's work.

Lay thine hand. A ceremony of blessing (Gen. 48:14) and consecration (Num. 8:10), attended and followed by the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit (Deut. 34:9). In the Christian church the laying on of hands in the rite of ordination combines the three aspects of blessing, succession to office, and authority to teach (Acts 6:6; 13:3; 2 Tim. 1:6).

19. Set him before Eleazar. Eleazar had small part in this ceremony other than that of being a witness.

Before all the congregation. The ceremony was to be as public as possible, that there be no question or uncertainty as to Joshua's authority.

Give him a charge. Literally, "command him" (see Deut. 31:7, 8, 14, 15, 23).

20. Some of thine honour. The word translated "honour" is often used of royal majesty and authority. Moses was to begin immediately to place some of his own responsibility and authority upon Joshua, that he might begin to exercise it concurrently with Moses.

Be obedient. That the people might begin to acknowledge and obey Joshua's authority.

21. Before Eleazar. The authority of Joshua was in some respects less, apparently, than that of Moses. Moses received counsel directly from God, but Joshua was to go to the high priest as a mediator between him and God. The high priest, in turn, was to consult the Urim (Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8).

At his word. That is, the command of the high priest. Joshua was to lead the people, but under the direction of the high priest.

23. Laid his hands. Moses was anxious that Joshua should have a full measure of the wisdom and guidance that had been his. He was to be the shepherd of the flock, to bring rest and peace to the people.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

16-20PP 462
21 SR 183
21-23PP 463

CHAPTER 28

1 *Offerings are to be observed.* 3 *The continual burnt offering.* 9 *The offering on the sabbath,* 11 *on the new moons,* 16 *at the passover,* 26 *in the day of firstfruits.*

1. The Lord spake. The Lord now sets forth His will with respect to certain offerings, those for the daily morning and evening services, for Sabbath days, for new moons.

2. My offering. Heb. *qorban*, from the root "to approach," "to draw near," that is, for a specific purpose. It is used of approaching a judge with a case, of coming to dedicate something, of coming to present an offering. *Qorban* therefore became a general term for any oblation (see Mark 7:11).

My bread. Literally, "my food." The Hebrew reads, literally, "my offering, even my bread," rather than "my offering, and my bread." The heathen custom of offering food to their gods, presumably to be eaten by them, is a travesty of the custom of presenting the offerings of a repentant people to God as evidence of sorrow for sin and an earnest desire for forgiveness (see DA 28; Lev. 21:6, 8, 17, 21; 22:25; Mal. 1:7).

My sacrifices made by fire. Perhaps this refers particularly to the fat portions burned on the altar.

For a sweet savour. Compare Lev. 1:9, 13, 17; Num. 15:3; etc.

3. The offering made by fire. The "continual"service of the daily sacrifice (see on Ex. 29:38–40) with its promises (vs. 42, 43, 45) is particularly spoken of here.

Without spot. Perfection in the lamb was expressly required and emphasized (Heb. 9:14). This qualification had also been required of other sacrifices (Ex. 12:5; Lev. 1:3; Num. 19:2; 1 Peter 1:19).

A continual burnt offering. An abbreviated form "the daily," or "continual," is found in Dan. 8:11–13; 11:31; 12:11. The continual aspect of this offering provided a striking parallel to the Lamb of God, whose one sacrifice is continually effective; He died once for all (Heb. 7:3; 10:12, 14).

4. Offer in the morning. Compare the words of Ps. 5:3, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee," which may originally have implied a sacrifice.

At even. Literally, "between the evenings" (see Ex. 12:6; Num. 9:3).

6. A continual burnt offering. That is, to be offered daily (Ex. 29:42). The continual burnt offering and the "perpetual incense" (Ex. 30:8) were similar to the morning and evening prayers of the Christian.

Ordained in mount Sinai. Literally, "made on Mt. Sinai." That is where Moses received the sacrificial laws.

7. The drink offering. Also given in Mt. Sinai (Ex. 29:40).

In the holy place. Probably at the base of the altar of burnt offerings, which stood within the court (Ex. 29:42).

The strong wine. Heb. *shekar*. The drink offering, with this one exception, was made of ordinary wine, *yayin*. The quantity used for each lamb was about 1 qt. The word *shekar* is frequently used to denote a drink not made from grapes; it was usually made from grain or honey. For example, in Lev. 10:9, Aaron and his sons, were commanded not to drink *yayin* or *shekar* when they prepared to enter the tabernacle. Many commentators would insist that in this instance *shekar* must refer to the noblest and best wine. The Jewish commentators, by and large, speak of this instance of the use of *shekar* as excluding wine diluted with water, or as newly pressed wine.

8. The other lamb. That is, the one for the evening sacrifice. The preceding instructions are in regard to the morning lamb, but they apply also to the evening lamb. This sacrifice concluded the day's offerings, no other being offered after it.

9. On the sabbath day. The Sabbath offering was in addition to the continual daily sacrifices made each weekday. This meant that on the Sabbath day the priests had double duties to perform. This may have been in the mind of the Lord when He said that "the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless" (Matt. 12:5). In later years a

song especially for the Sabbath day was sung to accompany the pouring out of the libation (Ps. 92).

Two tenth deals. About 4 qt. With the double burnt offerings on the Sabbath there was also a double portion of such other accessory elements as flour and wine. The command in respect to the drink offering to be presented together with the burnt offering is found in ch. 15:5.

10. Beside. That is, in addition to. The daily sacrifice was not to be omitted because of the additional Sabbath day offerings. The additional offerings enjoined were seven in number (Num. 28:11, 19, 26; 29:35–37).

11. In the beginnings. This may have been given by God to offset the idolatrous celebrations of each new moon, centering of course in the worship of the moon. Silver trumpets were then blown (ch. 10:2, 10). In later years business was suspended on this day (Amos 8:5; 1 Sam. 20:5; Isa. 1:13).

12. Three tenth deals. About 6 dry qt. (6.6 l.).

For a meat offering. For each bullock there was a precise quantity of flour (see ch. 15:9).

Two tenth deals. About 4 dry qt. (4.4 l.), the same as for a ram (ch. 15:6).

13. A several tenth deal. Compare with ch. 15:4. The cereal offering was to accompany each of the seven lambs each of the seven lambs mentioned in v. 11.

14. Their drink offerings. To accompany the various sacrifices.

Every month. At the new moons larger numbers of sacrifices were to be offered, and therefore more attention and work were demanded than was true even of the Sabbath days. Little time or opportunitywould remain for the child of God to be tempted by the idolatrous rites of the surrounding heathen at the times of new moon.

15. One kid of the goats. Compare ch. 15:24.

16. The passover. The only special offering enjoined for the day of the Passover, the 14th of Nisan, was the paschal lamb itself (Ex. 12:6; see also p. 709). This feast had not been observed since Israel left Kadesh-barnea 38 years before.

17. The fifteenth day. The evening of the 14th day was the feast of the Passover (Ex. 12:6, 14). The 15th day was the day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6). The paschal lamb was slain late in the afternoon of the 14th, and eaten—together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs—after sunset, that is, on the 15th.

Seven days. Compare Ex. 12:15; 13:6, 7; Lev. 23:6.

18. No manner of servile work. Literally, "any work of tillage." Any occupation that required laborious work was forbidden (Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:7, 8).

19. A sacrifice. The particular sacrifice had not been prescribed previously (see Lev. 23:8). The sacrifices appointed are the same as those for the first day of each month (v. 11).

20. Their meat offering. Compare v. 12, where the same appointments were ordained for the first day of each month.

22. One goat. The same as for the new moon (v. 15).

23. Beside. That is, in addition to the daily burnt sacrifice. They were all offered in the morning, subsequent to the daily morning sacrifice.

24. After this manner. All the special offerings listed in vs. 16–25, the same as those for the first day of every month, were thus offered on each day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:5–8).

25. On the seventh day. Compare Ex. 13:6; Lev. 23:7, 8. The first and last days of the feast were identical in their requirements.

26. The day of the firstfruits. This is an unusual phrase. It is also called "the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours" (Ex. 23:16), and "the feast of weeks" at the time of bringing in the first fruits of the wheat harvest (Ex. 34:22; Deut. 16:10; see also Lev. 23:15–21).

A new meat offering. Compare Lev. 23:16. The principal feature on this day was the new meal or cereal offering. It consisted of two loaves called the "firstfruits unto the Lord" (Lev. 23:17). These loaves were made of the first-ripe wheat. With these two loaves were offered seven male lambs, one young bullock, two rams, two he-lambs for a peace offering, and one male goat for a sin offering (Lev. 23:18).

After your weeks. That is, the seven weeks numbered from the first day of unleavened bread (Lev. 23:15–21).

28. Meat offering. Compare vs. 12, 20, dealing with the new moon and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

29. A several tenth deal. Compare vs. 13, 21.

30. One kid. In addition to the one offered with the two lambs (Lev. 23:19).

31. Beside. The daily sacrifice was to be offered even though other sacrifices were enjoined (see vs. 10, 15, 23). The importance of the daily sacrifice was not to be held subordinate to the others.

CHAPTER 29

1 *The offering at the feast of trumpets,* 7 *at the day of afflicting their souls,* 13 *and on the eight days of the feast of tabernacles.*

1. An holy convocation. The seventh month, the first month of the civil year, had been specially set apart for religious purposes (Lev. 23:23–44), and had more days devoted to religious ordinances than any other month of the year. The holy convocation here indicated had already been ordained (Lev. 23:24, 25).

A day of blowing the trumpets. The blowing of the silver trumpets had already been enjoined on various occasions (see ch. 10:10), including the new moons. But the first day of the seventh month, or new year's day of the civil calendar, was particularly the day for blowing them. The word "trumpets" does not appear either here or in Lev. 23:24. The term *teruah*, here translated "blowing the trumpets," appears in Lev. 25:9 *shopar*, or "ram's horn."

2. Offer a burnt offering. In addition to all other sacrifices previously ordained for this day (Lev. 23:25). The sacrificial animals were less than those appointed for the festivals of Num. 28:19, 27, inasmuch as they were in addition to others for the same day.

3. Three tenth deals. About 6 qt. (6.6 l.), the usual portion for all sacrifices of this nature (ch. 15:6, 9).

4. One tenth deal. For vs. 4 and 5 compare ch. 28:15, 22, 30.

6. Burnt offering of the month. A burnt offering of two bullocks had previously been appointed for the beginning of each month (ch. 28:11, 12). That ordinance was not to be omitted on the first day of the seventh month.

Unto their manner. That is, in the order previously appointed: the daily burnt offering, then the sacrifices appointed for the first day of each month, and finally those specially appointed for the first day of the seventh month.

7. The tenth day. The Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27), the climax of the entire sacrificial system. The ritual for this great day is found in Lev. 16 and 23:26–32.

Afflict your souls. Literally, "exercise yourselves," "be afflicted," "be humbled." This included fasting. This was and is the great annual fast strictly observed by orthodox Jews (cf. Lev. 16:29; 23:27-29, 32; Ps. 35:13; Isa. 58:3, 5; Acts 27:9).

Any work. The day was to be observed strictly as a sabbath of rest (Lev. 16:29, 31; 23:28–32).

8. A burnt offering. See v. 2.

9. Their meat offering. The meat offering was to be in the same proportions as noted in vs. 3, 4.

11. The sin offering of atonement. This is the ordinance from which the festival derived its special name (see Lev. 16). Note that Heb. 9:7-12, 23–28 is based on the description of Lev. 16. The blood of the sin offering of atonement was carried by the high priest into the most holy place. The blood of the bullock offered as a sin offering for the family of Aaron was also carried into the most holy place (Lev. 16:11, 14). Aside from these two, blood was never carried into the holy of holies.

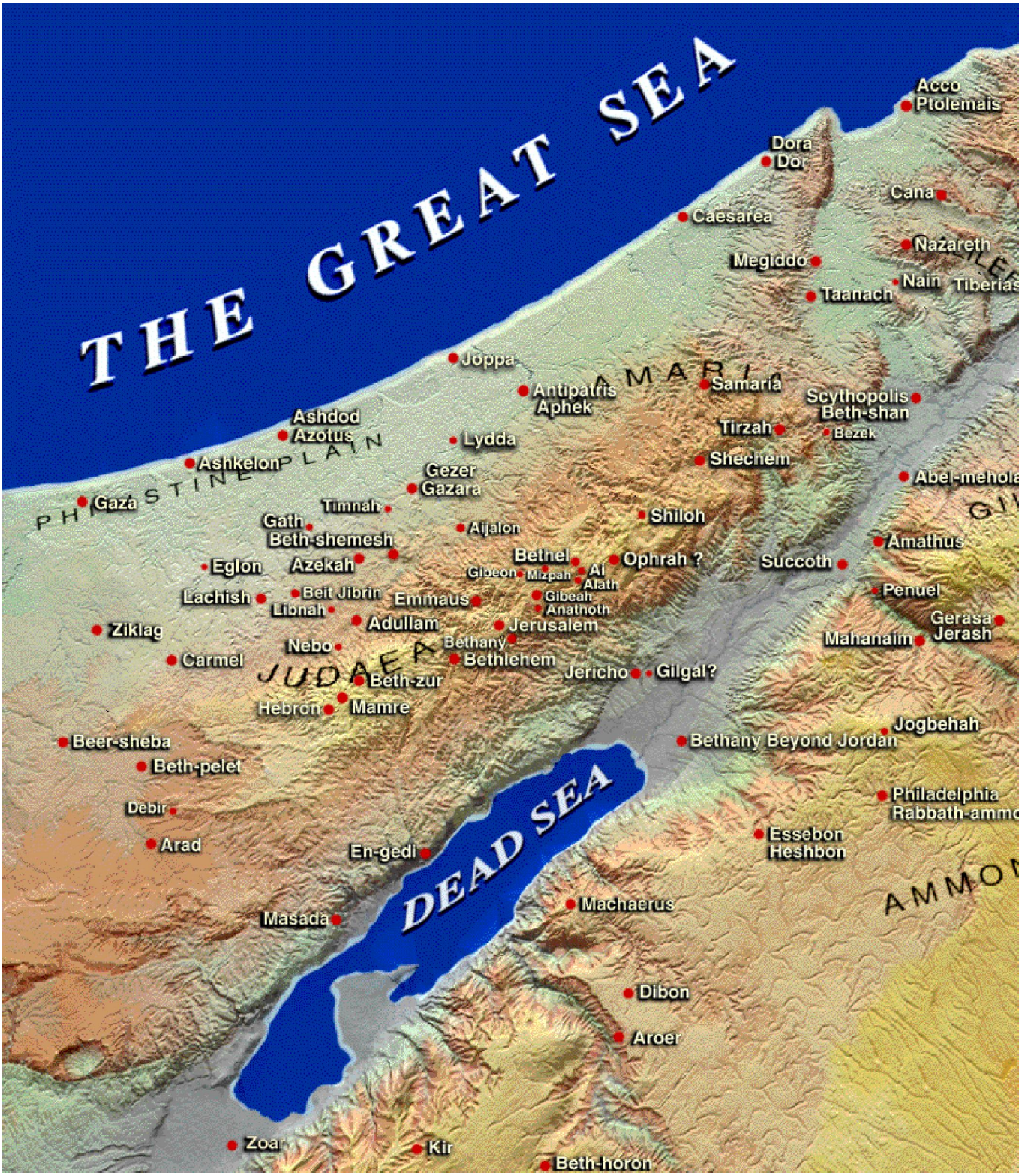
The continual burnt offering. Again it is stressed that the various offerings mentioned were not to be omitted, not even on the great Day of Atonement. Even that high day was to begin with the continual burnt offering and the other offerings belonging to it. These would be followed by the sin offering of this verse. Then would come the sacrifice of atonement as given in Lev. 16.

12. On the fifteenth day. That is, the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, which began at sunset of the 14th day (Lev. 23:34, 35).This feast followed the fruit and grape harvest (Deut. 16:13). The seven days were a time of happiness and rejoicing before the Lord.

Palestine in Biblical Times

[4]

[4]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Nu 21:25). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.



13. Thirteen young bullocks. The same type of sacrifice was enjoined for other festivals. But whereas 2 bullocks were sufficient for the other festivals, here 13 are

commanded (ch. 28:11, 19, 27). Each day for 7 consecutive days, one bullock less was offered each day (vs. 17, 20, 23, 26, 29, 32). Thus on the 7th day 7 bullocks were offered, thus making 70 bullocks during the 7 days.

16. A sin offering. The requirements of the sin offering were not augmented.

17. On the second day. One bullock less than on the preceding day. The number of rams and lambs was not affected. The entire system of ordinances rested upon the daily sacrifice; no matter what sacrifices were added the daily offering was never put aside. Similarly, the Lamb of God can never be superseded. No function, no ordinance, no rule, can take the place of the Son of God, through whom alone is salvation from sin.

35. A solemn assembly. The eighth day was set apart as a day of solemn joy before Jehovah. The word thus translated is from a root meaning "to restrain." A noun form of the same root is translated "magistrate," literally, "a possessor of restraint," as in Judges 18:7. On this day the children of Israel were to refrain from all secular work, and devote their thoughts to Jehovah.

36. A burnt offering. A special sacrifice appointed for this day (see v. 13).

37. According to their number. Compare ch. 15:1–13.

38. One goat for a sin offering. Whatever the festival a sin offering was required (chs. 28:15, 22, 30; 29:5; etc.). The people ever stood in need of forgiveness; it was important that they never lose sight of that fact.

39. These things ye shall do. The Lord had appointed certain festivals for certain seasons. These were to be carried out in the precise manner He had prescribed.

Beside your vows. In addition to all these regularly prescribed sacrifices, an individual might offer an additional burnt offering, either as a mark of gratitude to Jehovah or in performance of some vow.

Burnt offerings. Compare Lev. 22:18–21; Num. 15:1–13. The sacrifices of this chapter were enjoined above and beyond all burnt offerings, meat offerings, drink offerings, and peace offerings presented in fulfillment of special vows.

40. And Moses told. In the Hebrew Bible this is the first verse of ch. 30.

CHAPTER 30

1 *Vows are not to be broken.* 3 *The exception of a maid's vow.* 6 *Of a wife's.* 9 *Of a widow's, or her that is divorced.*

1. The heads of the tribes. The same men referred to in chs. 1:4, 16; 7:2; etc. Various expressions are used, "the heads of your tribes, and your elders" (Deut. 5:23), "the whole congregation of the children of Israel" (Joshua 18:1; 22:12), "the chief of all the people" (Judges 20:2), "all Israel" (1 Sam. 7:5), "all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes" (1 Chron. 28:1), "the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers" (2 Chron. 5:2), "the princes and the elders" (Ezra 10:8).

2. A vow. A pledge or promise to give something to God: a promise of personal service, as by Jacob at Bethel (Gen. 28:20; 31:13), Hannah's consecration of her son (1 Sam. 1:11), Jephthah's pledge concerning his daughter (Judges 11:30, 39).

A bond. An obligation, such as abstinence from wine, food, etc. (see 1 Sam. 14:24; Ps. 132:3; Acts 23:21). The Hebrew verb is used frequently with the meaning "to bind," "to imprison," "to harness."

Not break his word. Literally, "not untie his pledged word," in the sense of "to loosen," "to set free from obligation," "to make lawful," "to profane." To refrain from carrying out one's solemn promises to God is an act of base ingratitude and sinful neglect

(Deut. 23:21; Eccl. 5:4; Matt. 5:33). It is better that a man make no vow than to promise and not carry it out (Eccl. 5:2–5).

3. If a woman also vow. An unmarried woman was considered under her father's control, and therefore not free to plan and decide without his counsel and consent. Elderly spinster women are not mentioned.

4. Hold his peace. Literally, "be silent," or "make no objection."

Her vows shall stand. It was not in the province of the father to disannul any part of a vow if he made no objection when he heard of it or heard his daughter express it.

5. In the day. That is, as soon as he hears.

Disallowed her. The father's consent was necessary to make the vow, or pledge, binding. But if on becoming acquainted with the vow he said nothing, then his silence was looked upon as consent. If, however, the father made objection, then the young girl was free of her vow or bond, and under no necessity to carry it out.

6. Had at all an husband. That is, if she be married. The same would also apply to a betrothed woman still living in herfather's house, for a betrothed husband had rights in connection with his betrothed wife. For example, if she committed adultery, she was stoned to death just as if the marriage had already taken place. She and all her possessions were considered as belonging to her betrothed husband (Deut. 22:23, 24; see also Matt. 1:19, 20).

When she vowed. Literally, "and her vows be upon her." The vow might have been taken before her betrothal, and had the consent of her father at the time. Now she is betrothed and legally under her betrothed husband's jurisdiction, and he might require her to renounce her vow.

8. If her husband. Compare with v. 5, where the same principle is applied to a daughter in her father's home, as here to a betrothed wife in relation to her husband.

9. Of a widow. Both a widow and a divorced woman were free to make vows and carry them out. However, a widow or a divorcee who had returned to her father's house and was under his protection would again be subject to his authority. The word translated "divorced" is, literally, "driven out." The regulations of Deut. 24:1 are presupposed here.

11. Her vows. If the vow had been taken while the husband was alive, in one case, or before the woman was divorced in the other, and no objection was raised, then the vow must be carried out by the woman who made it. Changed marital status did not affect vows binding prior to the change.

12. Made them void. A widow or a divorcee was not held accountable for vows previously annulled by her husband.

14. Hold his peace. His silence, when he was fully aware of what she was doing, established and confirmed her vows.

15. Bear her iniquity. The full responsibility was his; she was free. For the nature of the guilt incurred and the ritual required to be free from it, see Lev. 5:4–10.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1, 2 4T 471

2 AA 74

CHAPTER 31

1 *The Midianites are spoiled, and Balaam slain.* 13 *Moses is wroth with the officers, for saving the women alive.* 19 *How the soldiers, with their captives and spoil, are to be*

purified. 25 *The proportion whereby the prey is to be divided*. 48 *The voluntary oblation unto the treasury of the Lord*.

1. The Lord spake. As recorded in ch. 25:16–18, the command to smite the Midianites had already been given to Moses; now he was to organize the military expedition to execute God's will. The Midianites, at the suggestion of Balaam, had led Israel into grievous sin, which in turn brought a plague from God upon His people.

2. Avenge. The offense of the Midianites had taken place during the leadership of Moses; he was now commissioned of God to punish the offenders before laying down his authority.

Afterward. God had previously spoken to Moses of his impending death (ch. 27:12, 13). In addition to the campaign against the Midianites, there remained the duty of passing on directions concerning the conquest of the land of Canaan (chs. 32 and 34), and making provision for the Levites (ch. 35:1–8).

3. Arm some of yourselves. Literally, "arm from among those with you, men." Verse 2 speaks of avenging the children of Israel; this verse calls it the vengeance of Jehovah. Thus, closely, are the interests of God and His people identified.

4. A thousand. This small number suggests careful selection, inasmuch as some of the larger tribes could easily have supplied a much greater number.

All the tribes. Some think this may have included the Levites, not perhaps to bear arms, but as a service unit behind the front line. But the fact that the Levites received their share of the booty from that portion of it assigned to those who did not go to war (vs. 30, 37–41) seems to preclude such an idea.

5. Twelve thousand. Compare Judges 21:10, where the same number was sent against Jabesh-gilead. The idea conveyed in v. 5 is that the young men were levied. The number seems small in comparison with the Midianites, who had five kings with their armed forces.

6. Moses sent them. That is, commissioned them with authority to carry out God's command.

Phinehas. We are not told whether Phinehas went as commander of the expedition, thereby superseding Joshua, or whether he went solely in his role as chief priest (see Joshua 22:13). His former deed of valor for the honor of God had no doubt given him a great reputation for decision and courage (ch. 25:8).

The holy instruments. That is, the sacred vessels. We are not told which vessels were taken. Some have suggested the ark (see Num. 10:33; Joshua 3:14; 6:8), others, the plate of gold that Aaron wore upon his head (Ex. 28:36). The word here translated "instruments" is the same as that rendered "vessels" in Num. 3:31. It may be permissible to think of the trumpets of the sanctuary as being "holy instruments."

7. They warred. The Israelitish forces, presumably, crossed the border into Midianite territory and there engaged their forces.

Slew all the males. That is, of the attacking force, presumably males of military age. Another destruction of the Midianites is recorded in Judges 8:12, by Gideon. The wiping out of the entire male population would have led to the extinction of the nation; yet the Midianites appear again and again as violent enemies of Israel (Judges 6:1, 2; 7:14; 8:22; 9:17, 28; Isa. 60:6).

8. The kings of Midian. Various titles are used for these men: elders (ch. 22:4), and dukes or princes (Joshua 13:21).

Evi. See Joshua 13:21.

Rekem. See Joshua 13:21; 1 Chron. 2:43; 7:16. Also the name of a Benjamite town (Joshua 18:27).

Zur. See Num. 25:15; Joshua 13:21.

Hur. Given also as the name of an Israelite (Ex. 17:10), a relative of Caleb.

Balaam. His end was vastly different from the hope he had expressed for himself (Num. 23:10; Joshua 13:22).

9. Took all the women. It was an ancient custom to slay the men but not the women and children (Gen. 34:25; 1 Kings 11:16). The law of God later required, in certain instances, simply the slaying of the males, in other instances, the slaying of the whole population (Deut. 20:13, 14, 16).

Cattle. The word thus translated is from the verb "to be tongue-tied," "to be dumb." It often includes all the larger domesticated animals. The Midianites were famous for their camels (Judges 6:5), which are not mentioned separately here (see Ex. 9:25; 12:12; Ps. 135:8; Jer. 50:3).

10. Their cities. The destruction of these fortified places would tend to prevent a serious uprising later.

Goodly castles. Literally, "their encampments," a reference to the circular encampments of nomadic tribes. See Gen. 25:16, where the same word is used.

11. The spoil. They had obtained possession of the spoil, as noted in v. 9, and now they carried it away.

12. The captives. The conquest of this tribe of Midianites was complete. The "captives" were the women and children; the "prey," the camels, oxen, sheep, and goats; and the "spoil," the precious metals, jewels, clothing, etc.

The congregation. Perhaps a reference to the 70 elders and the princes of the tribes, who represented the people.

The plains of Moab. From where they had set out to give battle to the Midianites (see chs. 22:1; 26:3, 63).

13. Went forth. This was a reception committee to welcome the victors and to make such arrangements as might be necessary for the cleansing, separation, or destruction of unclean things.

14. Moses was wroth. Particularly so, because unacceptable Midianite women had been brought as captives, including the very ones who had been the cause of the plague that had swept the camp (see vs. 15, 17).

Officers. Literally, "inspectors" or "overseers."

15. Have ye saved? The punishment of the women, instruments used of Satan to bring sin into the camp of Israel, was implicit in the command to "avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites" (ch. 31:2). Compare the punishment of the Amalekite women (1 Sam. 15:3).

17. Kill every male. In order to reduce an idolatrous nation to impotency.

Every woman that hath known man. Probably including the very ones responsible for Israel's debasement.

18. The women children. Since they were young and impressionable there was the possibility of their being weaned from idolatry and its unclean practices.

Keep alive. For a law that came later, the enactment of which may have reflected the capture of these women, see Deut. 21:10–14.

19. Abide without the camp. See ch. 19:9–11.

Purify. With water mingled with the ashes of a red heifer (see ch. 19). Ceremonial uncleanness was a serious matter for the children of Israel (see Mark 7:15).

20. Purify. This could be accomplished by the water of separation, or in running water (Lev. 11:32, 33). Both apparently came under the ordinance for those who had come into contact with dead bodies.

Made of skins. Including footwear, saddles, etc.

Goats' hair. This would apply to tents (Ex. 25:4), and also to rugs and bedding (1 Sam. 19:13, 16).

22. The brass. That is, bronze or copper (see on Ex. 27:3).

Lead. See Jer. 6:29. The six metals here mentioned were common in Egypt and other ancient countries.

23. Fire. Water is not an adequate cleanser of metals, but fire is. The various utensils taken from the Midianites were unclean by reason of contact with dead bodies, and also because they had been used by the heathen.

24. Wash. See ch. 19:19.

25. The Lord spake. That is, after the ritual of purification had been completed and the men had entered camp.

26. The sum of the prey. Literally, "the head of the prey." No mention is made of the spoil of jewels, precious metals, and cloth. These things afterward provided a voluntary oblation (vs. 50, 53).

27. Divide the prey. The entire camp had suffered at the hand of the Midianites; therefore it was proper that the ones who had remained in camp should also receive a share.

28. Levy a tribute. Literally, "lift up a fixed amount." The word here translated "tribute" occurs elsewhere only in vs. 37–41. For other examples of the division of booty see Joshua 22:8; 1 Sam. 30:24, 25.

Sheep. The Hebrew word includes goats as well as sheep.

29. Give it unto Eleazar. As a tithe for the maintenance of the priests and the Levites (see ch. 18:21, 24, 26).

30. One portion of fifty. This was 2 per cent of the spoil apportioned to the congregation. The portion of the Levites was 320 maidens, 6,750 sheep and goats, 720 cattle, and 610 asses. The percentage was no doubt commanded in proportion to the relative number of Levites. The priests were not allowed, however, to marry non-Israelite wives (Lev. 21:14).

31. Moses and Eleazar. The command was given to Moses (v. 25), with Eleazar as assistant (v. 26). No mention is made here of "the chief fathers of the congregation" (v. 26). Undoubtedly they had full confidence in the integrity of Eleazar.

32. The rest of the prey. Perhaps better, "the rest that remains," that is, of the booty. The spoil taken on the field of battle would be diminished by a number of factors; the slaughter of some animals for food, the death of some from the hardships of the march, from straying, and from disease.

48. The officers. Those in command made a personal report to Moses of the discharge of their responsibilities.

49. Lacketh not one man. When the roll was called of all who had been engaged in the expedition, it was revealed the Israelites had not suffered a single casualty. It had

indeed been the battle of the Lord (see v. 3). No doubt it would have been regarded as a tragedy for men to lose their lives on the very threshold of the promised inheritance.

50. An oblation. Ornaments of precious metals were commonly worn by nomadic peoples. Often, the ornaments for the neck, wrists, and ankles were of silver or gold coins strung together (see Judges 8:24–26).

Every man. Each wished to offer something to Jehovah in thankfulness for the victory and safe return (see Gen. 14:20; 2 Sam. 8:11, 12; 1 Chron. 26:26, 27).

Jewels of gold. Better, "ornaments of gold" (see Gen. 24:53; Ex. 3:22).

Chains. For the ankles, and perhaps also for the upper part of the arms.

Bracelets. See Gen. 24:47; Eze. 16:11.

Rings. See Gen. 41:42; Esther 3:10.

Earrings. Very common among Eastern peoples, both ancient and modern.

To make an atonement. Perhaps in reference to the matter of v. 14, as well as to other personal incidents involving uncleanness and guilt that may have occurred during the battle.

53. Every man for himself. Undoubtedly there had been individual plundering and spoilation; but of all that each man received, he gladly gave a portion to God, in thankfulness of heart.

54. For a memorial. Much of the great quantity of gold was no doubt melted down and made into vessels for use in the sanctuary.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-54PP 456
2, 7 PP 456
8 PP 451, 456; SR 177
16 PP 451; 5T 599

CHAPTER 32

1 *The Reubenites and Gadites sue for their inheritance on that side Jordan.* 6 *Moses reproveth them.* 16 *They offer him conditions to his content.* 33 *Moses assigneth them the land.* 39 *They conquer it.*

1. Children of Reuben. The Reubenites and the Gadites were encamped on the south side of the tabernacle, probably not as neighbors, but with the tribe of Simeon between them (ch. 2:10–14). Reuben was Jacob's first-born, and is, therefore, mentioned first, according to tribal seniority. In the following verses Gad is mentioned first, since that tribe took the initiative in the matter of settling on the east side of the Jordan. The fact of their having lived close together for 38 years tended to influence them to stay together in their permanent location.

Great multitude of cattle. That is, in comparison with the rest of the Israelites. How they came to be so rich in cattle is not stated (see Judges 5:16, 17).

The land of Jazer. This name appears elsewhere as that of a town. It is thought to have been north or northwest of Rabbath Ammon.

The land of Gilead. The name of a district mentioned first in Gen. 37:25, lying north and south of the brook Jabbok. It was noted for its fertile soil. The name Gilead is sometimes used to denote all the territory occupied by Israel east of the Jordan.

A place for cattle. Included in this territory was Bashan, noted for its fine cattle (see Ps. 22:12).

2. Gad. Gad takes the initiative in proposing their idea. No mention is made of Manasseh, who also had much cattle and shared in the country east of Jordan with Gad and Reuben (see Deut. 3:12, 13; 4:43; 29:8; Joshua 12:6; 13:29, 31; 14:3; 18:7).

3. Ataroth. Assigned to Gad (v. 34).

Dibon. In the kingdom of Sihon (ch. 21:30), and also given to Gad (v. 34).

Jazer. See v. 1. Another place belonging to Gad (v. 34).

Nimrah. Called Beth-nimrah in v. 36, meaning, perhaps, "the place of the leopard."

Heshbon. The capital of Sihon, king of the Amorites (ch. 21:26–28), and allotted to the Reubenites (v. 37).

Elealeh. Mentioned as adjacent to Heshbon (Num. 32:37; Isa. 15:4; 16:9; Jer. 48:34). Probably the modern *el–'Al*, just northeast of Heshbon.

Shebam. Also given as Shibmah (v. 38) and Sibmah (Isa. 16:8, 9; Jer. 48:32). It was famous for its vineyards.

Nebo. Allotted to the Reubenites (v. 38).

Beon. In v. 38 we find Baal-meon, which was changed to Beon by the Israelites in order to eliminate the name of Baal. Later, when it fell into the hands of the Moabites, they restored the full name, given as Beth-meon (Jer. 48:23). It is called Beth-baal-meon in Joshua 13:17. It was probably assigned to the Reubenites. Its ruins are known as *Ma'in* today, about 5 mi. south of Mt. Nebo.

4. The Lord smote. That is, with the intention of giving it to His people for an inheritance (ch. 21:24, 25).

6. Shall ye sit here? In view of the comparative ease with which the country east of the Jordan had been conquered, Gad and Reuben no doubt thought the country west of Jordan would be rapidly occupied.

7. Discourage. Literally, "oppose," "alienate." Moses feared that the action of the two tribes would lead the other tribes to refuse to cross the Jordan. The effect would then be much like that of the faithless report of the spies that resulted in a whole generation perishing in the wilderness.

8. Your fathers. Not merely the ancestors of the two tribes, but of the whole nation.

Kadesh-barnea. See ch. 13:3, 26.

9. The valley of Eshcol. See ch. 13:21–23. The spies turned the hearts of Israel from entering the Land of Promise, depicting the enemy as altogether too strong for them to cope with (ch. 13:31).

10. The Lord's anger. See ch. 14:21, 28.

11. None of the men. See ch. 14:22, 23, 29, 35.

12. The Kenezite. See ch. 14:24. The same name is given in Joshua 14:6, 14. It is derived from Kenaz (see Gen. 36:15, 42; 1 Chron. 1:36, 53). It is possible that Kenaz was a common ancestor of Othniel and Caleb, from whom Othniel's father took the name. Jephunneh is called a Kenezite (Joshua 14:14).

Wholly. That is, "altogether" (see ch. 14:24, 30, 38).

14. An increase of sinful men. Better, "a brood of sinful men." The Hebrew word here translated "increase" is not found elsewhere in the OT. Moses was greatly disturbed by this appeal.

15. If ye turn away. As their fathers had done, and perished in the wilderness.

Destroy all this people. The people might then refuse to go over Jordan and consolidate their claim on Canaan. After their release from military service by Joshua,

with his blessing, these same tribes precipitated an incident that led their brethren to fear, though without warrant, a visitation of God's wrath (see Joshua 22:1–29).

16. Sheepfolds. Constructed of dry stone courses, field stones gathered together, and with no roof.

Cities. Probably repaired Amorite dwellings already on the ground. A weakness of this plan was that their women and children and their cattle and sheep could scarcely be left in newly conquered, hostile territory without a strong, well-armed force to protect them.

17. Ready armed. Literally, "equipped for war, hastening." This was a promise not to delay in any way the crossing of the Jordan, but to act as a forward unit or advance guard before the main host (see Deut. 3:18; Joshua 4:12).

The inhabitants. The Amorites and Moabites, who previously occupied the territory (ch. 21:26).

18. Until. A promise to stay by their duty to the nation until the conquest of Canaan was completed. According to Deut. 33:21 Gad had secured his first part, that is, the territory of Sihon and Og, and executed the command of the Lord—they kept their promise to help their brethren occupy Canaan.

19. We will not inherit. They disavow any desire to claim inheritance west of Jordan.

This side Jordan. The same Hebrew word is translated "yonder side" and also "this side." It is from the verb "to pass over," "to go through." The derived noun means "the region beyond," and in the plural masculine form is applied to the Hebrews.

20. Before the Lord. Jehovah is looked upon as a God of battles, going before the marching nation to confound their enemies (see Num. 21:14; Joshua 4:5, 11–13; 6:8, 9; Judges 5:23).

22. Guiltless. The word thus translated is from the verb "to be clean," "to be exempt from punishment." The second meaning is preferable here.

Your possession before the Lord. That is, with the full approval of the Lord.

23. Your sin will find you out. Literally, "and know ye your sin which will find you." God expressed the same idea in addressing Cain: "Sin lieth at the door" (Gen. 4:7).

25. As my lord commandeth. A typically Eastern touch, as that which Moses stated was precisely what they themselves had suggested (v. 17).

26. Cities of Gilead. Such fortified places as were formerly occupied by the enemy.

27. Every man armed. For garrison duty east of Jordan and an expeditionary force to accompany the main body of the Israelites over the Jordan.

28. Commanded Eleazar. Moses knew he would not cross the Jordan, and therefore placed upon Eleazar and Joshua the responsibility to see that Reuben and Gad carried out their promises (see Joshua 1:13, 14; 22:1–6).

29. The land of Gilead. The whole of Gilead was scarcely in their possession at this point. They were fortifying a number of cities, not only as safe refuges for their families, but also as strong points from which to complete subjection of the land.

30. Pass over. Their promise as recorded in v. 17 must be honorably carried out; otherwise they would be compelled to live on the west side of the Jordan.

31. So will we do. They reiterate and confirm their promise to Moses (v. 25), invoking the name of Jehovah as evidence of their good faith.

32. This side Jordan. Confirming their former promises in the presence of Eleazar and Joshua, they speak of the east side of Jordan as "this side," for they were in the land of Gilead.

33. Half the tribe of Manasseh. These people were known as warriors (Joshua 17:1); and inasmuch as there was room, they too were granted a possession in Gilead. It is evident from v. 39 that the half tribe of Manasseh had cooperated in the conquest of Gilead, and perhaps unaided had subdued certain portions.

Sihon. The territories of Sihon and Og were the first to be taken over by the Israelites, and the people taken subjected (see Num. 21:24, 29; 2 Kings 15:29).

34. Gad built. The list of cities named in vs. 34–38 corresponds closely with that of v. 3. An additional and more complete list is found in Joshua 13:24–28.

Dibon. The place where the Moabite stone was found in 1868. This city constantly changed hands. Here it is allotted to Gad. In Joshua 13:17 it is listed for Reuben (see also Num. 21:30; Isa. 15:2; Jer. 48:18, 22).

The building of these cities must have been more of the nature of repairing the ravages of war. The inhabitants were destroyed, but not the cities (Deut. 2:34, 35). Compare this with the experience of Jeroboam, who is recorded as having "built" Shechem, when actually he rebuilt it (1 Kings 12:25). Similarly, Azariah "built" Elath upon restoring it to Judah (2 Kings 14:22).

Ataroth. The modern Attarus, about 7 mi. to the north of Dibon, the modern Dhiban.

Aroer. An Amorite city conquered by Sihon (Deut. 2:36; 3:12; 4:48). The modern name of this city is *'Arā'ir*, which is situated near the river Arnon, 3 mi. south of the modern Dhiban. The same name is found in Joshua 13:25; Judges 11:33; 1 Sam. 30:28.

35. Atroth, Shophan. Not yet identified. Perhaps a single city, Atroth-Shophan.

Jaazer. Meaning "helpful." Equivalent to the Jazer of v. 3.

Jogbehah. Now *Jubeihât*, some 6 mi. northwest of Rabbath Ammon.

36. Beth-nimrah. Perhaps the modern *Tell el–Bleibil*, 6 mi. east of the Jordan and some 8 mi. north of the Dead Sea.

Beth-haran. Said by some to be the modern *Tell Iktanû*, some 7 mi. northeast of the mouth of the Jordan River.

Fenced cities. For the protection of the women and children to be left behind with their garrisons.

Folds for sheep. These would be built within the protection of the outer fortifications. This was excellent country for grazing, as the Moabites were fully aware (2 Kings 3:4).

37. Reuben built. Again the idea is that of repairing and making habitable and secure, cities that had been damaged in war.

Heshbon. Another city that had manychanges of fortune. In ch. 21:25 it is in the possession of the Amorites. In Joshua 13:17, as here, Reuben has control of it. In Joshua 21:39 Gad is the possessor. Moab again possesses it according to Isa. 15:4; 16:9; Jer. 48:2. Eventually it comes under the power of the children of Ammon (Jer. 49:1–3).

Kirjathaim. Recorded as the city of a giant people called Emims (Gen. 14:5). Probably *el–Qereiyât*, between Dhiban and the Dead Sea.

38. Nebo. Probably related to the Hebrew words "to prophesy" and "prophet."

Probably *Khirbet el–Mekhaiyet*, about 5 mi. southwest of Heshbon and near Mt. Nebo, where Moses died (see Deut. 32:49), east of the north end of the Dead Sea.

Names being changed. Literally, "changed of name." The names of Nebo and Baal-meon were changed because they stood for the gods whose worship was centered there. The ancient names, however, persisted (Joshua 13:17; Eze. 25:9).

Shibmah. See on v. 3.

Builded. Again, in the sense of repairing or rebuilding (see 1 Kings 9:17; 2 Chron. 11:6).

39. Gilead. Perhaps the reference here is to the northern part only, and not in the more general sense as in vs. 1, 26, 29.

41. Jair. Jair was the son of Segub, the son of Hezron, who had married the daughter of Machir (1 Chron. 2:21, 22), a son of Manasseh.

Havoth-jair. Literally, "the towns of Jair," as in Joshua 13:30. These, or possibly other, groups of unwalled villages are mentioned in Judges 10:4; 1 Kings 4:13; 1 Chron. 2:22, 23.

42. Nobah. Compare Judges 8:11. Evidently a prominent prince.

Kenath. Identified with *Qanawât*, some 60 mi. due east of the Sea of Galilee (see 1 Chron. 2:23).

Called it Nobah. It is probable that 60 towns were taken. Jair, as the leader of the expedition, kept 23 for himself and divided the remainder among those who took part with him in the campaign. Nobah was one of these.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

12 PP 524

CHAPTER 33

1 *Two and forty journeys of the Israelites.* 50 *The Canaanites are to be destroyed.*

1. The journeys. From the Hebrew verb "to pull up," as tent pegs. Reference is to stages from one camp to another, as they "pulled up" stakes and set out on their way to a new campsite.

With their armies. Literally, "according to their hosts," suggesting an orderly arrangement (see Ex. 12:41, 51; 13:18).

Under the hand of Moses and Aaron. See Ex. 12:1, 28, 50. These two men fulfilled their tasks as appointed shepherds and ministers of the flock.

2. Moses wrote. Moses was the chronicler of these events, and wrote "by the commandment of the Lord" (see Ex. 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Deut. 31:9, 24).

3. Rameses. Also mentioned in Gen. 47:11; see on Ex. 1:11; 12:37.

4. Their firstborn. See Ex. 12:29–33.

Upon their gods. See on Ex. 7:17; 8:2; 12:12; see also Isa. 19:1; Jer. 43:12. The Lord took similar action later in respect to the gods of Babylon (Isa. 21:9).

5. Succoth. See on Ex. 12:37.

6. Etham. See on Ex. 13:20.

7. Pi-hahiroth. For the places mentioned in this verse see on Ex. 14:2.

8. Midst of the sea. See on Ex. 14:17–30.

Marah. The word thus translated is from the verb "to be bitter," "to be distressed." See on Ex. 15:23–25.

9. Elim. See on Ex. 15:27. The word thus translated is from a root meaning "to be first," "to be strong." The noun is applied to the oak tree, the pine, and also to thickets of trees where idol worship was carried on.

11. Wilderness of Sin. This is not to be confused with the Wilderness of Zin mentioned in ch. 13:21. See on Ex. 16:1.

13. Dophkah. Neither Dophkah nor Alush is mentioned elsewhere in the Scriptures, and neither can be identified with any known place today.

14. Rephidim. See on Ex. 17:1, 8 and 19:2.

No water … to drink. See on Ex. 17:2-6. Rephidim was also a place of trial from the Amalekites (see on Ex. 17:8–12; see also 1 Sam. 15:2), who inflicted losses upon stragglers but were defeated by Joshua and his forces.

15. Wilderness of Sinai. See on Ex. 3:1; 19:1.

Kibroth-hattaavah. Literally, "the graves of lust" (see ch. 11:34). Many died here for grumbling about the manna. This was also the place where God bestowed His Spirit upon the 70 elders.

17. Hazeroth. Compare chs. 11:35; 12:1, 10 for Miriam and Aaron's envious attitude toward Moses.

18. Rithmah. The name of a plant. See 1 Kings 19:5, where the same Hebrew root is translated "juniper" (cf. Job 30:4). Some have identified Rithmah with *Wadi Retemat*, but that is not certain.

19. Rimmon-parez. Not used elsewhere in the OT. The second half of the name appears often in other combinations (2 Sam. 5:20; 6:8; 1 Chron. 13:11; 14:11).

20. Libnah. Presumably an encampment not near any settled community. The root word means "to be white," and the name here may refer to limestone formations in the vicinity. The personal name Laban is probably a variant from this same root. See Joshua 10:29; 15:42 for another town of the same name. The Hebrew word for "moon" is from the same root, probably in reference to its pale light. The name may possibly indicate some connection with moon worship.

21. Rissah. Names are easily corrupted in pronunciation and spelling. Some have suggested that Rissah is the same as Rasa, some 16 mi. from Ezion-geber.

22. Kehelathah. Nothing is known with certainty regarding the places mentioned in vs. 22–28.

29. Hashmonah. Some identify this with Heshmon (Joshua 15:27).

30. Moseroth. Probably the Mosera of Deut. 10:6, where the death and burial of Aaron and the succession of Eleazar to his office occurred.

31. Bene-jaakan. Location unknown (see Deut. 10:6).

32. Hor-hagidgad. See Deut. 10:7 where a different spelling probably denotes the same place. Location unknown.

33. Jotbathah. It has been suggested that the Jotbah of 2 Kings 21:19 may be the same place (see also Deut. 10:7).

34. Ebronah. Location unknown.

35 Ezion-gaber. Compare Deut. 2:8; 1 Kings 9:26; 22:48; 2 Chron. 8:17; 20:36. A harbor for the merchant ships of King Solomon at the northern end of the Gulf of 'Aqaba. It is now known as *Tell el–Kheleifeh*.

36. Kadesh. See ch. 20:1. This Kadesh is the same as Kadesh-barnea, on the border of Canaan.

40. King Arad. Compare ch. 21:1. This verse seems out of place in this context.

41. Zalmonah. Location unknown; compare Mt. Zalmon (Judges 9:48) and Salmon (Ps. 68:14).

42. Punon. See Gen. 36:41 and 1 Chron. 1:52 for the name Pinon, probably a variant spelling of the same name. Identified with the modern *Feinân*, 25 mi. directly south of the Dead Sea.

43. Oboth. See ch. 21:10.

44. Ije-abarim. See on ch. 21:11.

45. Dibon-gad. See chs. 21:30; 32:34. Some stages of the Exodus are difficult to follow.

46. Almon-diblathaim. Perhaps the same as the Beth-diblathaim of Jer. 48:22.

47. Abarim. See on ch. 21:11; see also Num. 27:12; cf. Jer. 48:22.

48. Plains of Moab. See on ch. 22:1.

49. Beth-jesimoth. See Joshua 12:3; 13:20; Eze. 25:9. The modern *Tell el–'Azeimeh*, between Mt. Nebo and the Jordan, has been suggested as the site of this place.

Abel-shittim. See ch. 25:1. Possibly the modern *Tell el–Hammâm*, some 5 mi. north of Beth-jeshimoth.

50. The Lord spake. Definite instructions were given in respect to the law of possession of the land of Canaan.

51. When ye are passed over. Compare Num. 34:2; 35:10; Deut. 11:31; 18:9.

52. Ye shall drive out. The former inhabitants could not b,e allowed to remain in the land, as they were devoted to idolatry and would corrupt Israel (see Ex. 23:33; Deut. 20:16–18).

Pictures. Literally, "figured stones." This may refer to carved figures on the pillars inside their idol temples, such as are common in India today.

High places. A reference to the heathen sanctuaries and altars built on the high hills.

53. Ye shall dispossess. For the procedure and process see Ex. 23:29, 30; Deut. 7:22.

54. By lot. For directions see ch. 26:53–55.

Every man's inheritance. Even to the individual family inheritance.

55. Pricks. Compare the language of Joshua 23:13 and Eze. 28:24, and of Paul (2 Cor. 12:7).

Vex you. They were to be a continual source of uneasiness (see Judges 2:18; 4:3; 6:6).

56. I shall do unto you. As a matter of fact, the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan were never entirely exterminated. Their baleful influence continued throughout the history of Israel, who also came before God in judgment (see Judges 3:8, 14; 6:2).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

55 PP 544

CHAPTER 34

1 *The borders of the land.* 16 *The names of the men which shall divide the land.*

1. The Lord spake. In the same place as when He spoke to Moses about the settlement in Canaan (ch. 33:50), for there had been no move since then.

2. When ye come. That is, into the territory between Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea (see Num. 32:32; Joshua 22:11, 32).

3. Your south quarter. Literally, "your south side."

The salt sea. The Dead Sea, where the eastern and southern borders met. In Eze. 47:18 the prophet calls this the "east sea" (see also Gen. 14:3; Deut. 3:17; 4:49).

4. Your border shall turn. That is, the boundary line was to take a southwesterly direction.

The ascent of Akrabbim. That is, "the pass of the scorpions," suggesting that scorpions were numerous in that neighborhood (see Joshua 15:3; Judges 1:36). Generally held to be *Naqb es–Safa*, a pass leading northwest from the Arabah, 15 mi. long.

Zin. The Wilderness of Zin may have received its name from this place. It is mentioned only here and in Joshua 15:3.

South to Kadesh-barnea. See on ch. 13:17, 32.

Hazar-addar. Compare Joshua 15:3, where the name of this site is given in a shorter form as Adar, with Hezron as a separate place. It has been identified with *Khirbet el–Qudeirat*.

Azmon. This too is unidentified. Some commentators suggest the modern *'Ain el–Qoseimeh*.

5. Fetch a compass. Literally, "make a turn," that is, in a more westerly direction.

The river of Egypt. Not the river Nile, but the *Wadi el–'Arish*, which was to form the western boundary of Israel, until it reached the Mediterranean Sea about 50 mi. below Gaza. This was to be their border with Egypt.

6. Great sea. The Mediterranean.

7. Mount Hor. Not the Mt. Hor on the border of Edom (chs. 20:22; 33:38), where Aaron died. The site of this mountain is unknown; some commentators identify it with a spur of Mt. Libanus, or Mt. Lebanon.

8. The entrance of Hamath. Either the Orontes valley or modern *Lebweh*, 70 mi. southwest of Hamath, in the same valley. The word translated "entrance" is thought to be part of a distinct place name, and not to refer to Hamath itself. Either *Lebweh* or the Orontes valley might appropriately be designated "the entrance of Hamath," as one approached Hamath from the south.

9. Ziphron. No sure identification with any modern place is known. Some suggest Sibraim in Eze. 47:16 as a variant spelling of the same name.

Hazar-enan. This marked the terminus of the northern boundary, being its northeast corner (see Eze. 47:17; 48:1). The place has been tentatively identified with *Qaryatein*. The Hebrew name signifies "the court of the spring," referring, presumably, to an enclosed spring of water.

10. Shepham. Site unknown. It marked the southern tip of the eastern boundary.

11. Riblah. No doubt near the river Jordan, but its location is unknown.

Ain. Literally, "spring." As no other place name is associated with the word "spring," it is impossible to identify Ain.

Chinnereth. The Sea of Galilee. The name Chinnereth probably comes from the place named in Joshua 19:35 (see also Deut. 3:17). The words, "the sides of," refer to the hilly

slopes on the northeast of the Sea of Galilee. A better rendering would be "slope." The RSV reads "shoulder."

12. The border. That is, the eastern boundary.

13. Nine tribes. Two and a half tribes settled on the other side of Jordan (see vs. 14, 15).

15. On this side Jordan. Better, "beyond the Jordan."

17. These are the names. Responsible men were appointed whose decisions would be respected (see ch. 26:54, 55). Note that Eleazar and Joshua were to supervise the division of the land in the presence of God at the door of the tabernacle (Joshua 18:6, 8, 10; 19:51).

18. One prince of every tribe. Men of authority, and who were respected, were associated with Eleazar, the high priest, and Joshua, the commander in chief of the army. Impartiality and equity in the division of the territory were thus assured.

20. Shemuel. The same name as Samuel (see 1 Sam. 1:20; 1 Chron. 7:2).

Ammihud. See ch. 1:10.

21. Elidad. See ch. 11:26 for a variant spelling.

22. Bukki. For the same name see Ezra 7:4, and for a different spelling see 1 Chron. 25:4, 13.

23. Hanniel. See 1 Chron. 7:39.

24. Kemuel. A name found elsewhere but belonging to other persons (Gen. 22:21; 1 Chron. 27:17).

25. Elizaphan. See ch. 3:30.

26. Paltiel. See 2 Sam. 3:15.

The exactness with which Inspiration has preserved a record of the boundaries of the allotments of land made to the various tribes emphasizes the orderly way in which provision is to be made for the work of God. Nothing is to be left to chance; everything is to be carefully planned and executed.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

1-13PP 511
[5]

CHAPTER 35

1 *Eight and forty cities for the Levites with their suburbs, and measure thereof.* 6 *Six of them are to be cities of refuge.* 9 *The laws of murder.* 31 *No satisfaction for murder.*

2. Cities to dwell in. The Levites were not given land, vineyards, olive groves, etc., as an inheritance. It was fitting, however, that they should have suitable dwelling houses; therefore cities were set aside for their homes (Lev. 25:32).

Suburbs. Literally, "open land," or "pasture land," from the verb "to drive out." Here reference is to open countryside outside the city, to which cattle could be driven for grazing or that could be used for gardens. "Suburbs" as here used is equivalent to the English word "common," referring to the open space common to the community (see Eze. 48:10–20).

3. Cattle. The large animals, such as bullocks and camels.

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[5]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Nu 29:13). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Beasts. This may refer to sheep and goats, or may include all their livestock.

4. A thousand cubits. About 1/4 of a mi. (0.44 km.). Outside the city limits open land was provided for their cattle, their private gardens, and recreational parks, and for burial purposes.

6. Six cities for refuge. Three in Canaan, and three on the east side of Jordan (see Num. 35:14; Deut. 4:43; Joshua 20:7, 8).

Flee. The cities of refuge were a sanctuary, and thus a type of Christ, who shelters the sinner who flees to Him in faith (see Ex. 21:13; Deut. 19:2–9; Ps. 46:1; 142:5; Isa. 4:6; Rom. 8:1, 33, 34; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 6:18, 19).

7. Forty and eight. Compare Joshua 21:41.

8. According to his inheritance. The cities would be distributed according to population (see Num. 26:54; 33:54; Joshua 21:16–32).

11. Unawares. From a word whose root means "to go astray," "to commit an error." The word here used means, literally, "by mistake," "in error" (see Joshua 20:3; Eccl. 5:6). The right of sanctuary was recognized by most nations from remote antiquity.

12. The avenger. From a word whose root generally means "to redeem," "to act as a kinsman," implying close personal relationship. The duties of this "kinsman-redeemer" became both varied and many. One of his duties was to avenge a relative's murder. He was also to contract a levirate marriage (Ruth 3:13), to purchase a kinsman from slavery into which unfortunate circumstances had forced him (Lev. 25:47, 48), to prevent the alienation of family property (Jer. 32:8–12), and to buy back such property as may have fallen into the hands of others (Lev. 25:25).

Stand before the congregation. Just what duties the congregation performed is not stated in detail. But undoubtedly the whole procedure was forensic, with presentation of evidence, discussion, and decision by jury (see Num. 27:2; Deut. 19:17; Joshua 20:6). Note that Deut. 19:12 has the expression "the elders of his city."

13. Six cities. The six cities set aside were a sure refuge, with the roads leading to them kept in good repair.

15. These six cities. See Joshua 20:7, 8 for their names.

Sojourner. Or, "settler," referring perhaps to a person who had become attached to a Hebrew family in some more permanent way.

16. Instrument of iron. This phrase not only includes such weapons as swords and spears but various instruments made of iron, the primary function of which was not in war but in peaceful pursuits. It was the intent to kill, whether it was premeditated or was due to sudden anger, that is meant here.

17. With throwing a stone. Literally, "with a stone of the hand," meaning a stone large enough to be lifted and thrown so as to cause death (see Ex. 21:18).

18. Hand weapon of wood. Such as a shepherd's staff, or club, a walking stick, etc.

19. Revenger. The *goel* or "kinsman" (see on v. 12).

Meeteth him. That is, outside the city of refuge.

20. Thrust him. Better, "if he push him," that is, from some elevated place whence a fall would cause death (see Eze. 34:21).

21. His hand. That is, his fist.

22. Without enmity. That is, in a sudden rise of anger, under provocation but without premeditation, or previous intent to kill (Ex. 21:13; Deut. 19:5).

24. Shall judge. The accused was sent out of the city of refuge, presumably under the protection of an escort, to some place where the community would consider the evidence in the case (Ex. 21:12–14; Deut. 19:1–13).

25. High priest. The safety of the accused lay in his obeying the law of the city of refuge and abiding in it. In so doing he was literally under Levitical, or ecclesiastical, protection, and so subject to the high priest. A new administration would, figuratively, give him a new lease on life.

30. Witnesses. Compare Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16.

31. No satisfaction. From the noun form of a verb root commonly translated "to make an atonement," "to make reconciliation," "to purge." Here it means that a murderer might not be redeemed by paying a ransom price. This provision emphasizes the dignity of man and the value of his life in the sight of God.

32. No satisfaction. The same word as above. The enforced dwelling in the city of refuge was looked upon as a punishment for carelessness in committing accidental murder. The unintentional slayer of a man was not allowed to return to his home in exchange for a sum of money.

33. Pollute the land. There could be no expiation for the land (see Gen. 4:10; Deut. 21:1–9; Ps. 106:38).

34. Wherein I dwell. The sanctuary of God was among His people, and constituted a strong reason for guarding against "defiling" the land (see Ex. 29:45; Num. 23:21; 2 Chron. 20:11; Zech. 2:10). Compare the NT teaching in 2 Cor. 6:16, of the church, and the ideal state in the new earth (Rev. 21:3).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7 PP 511
11-15PP 515
26-33PP 516

CHAPTER 36

1 *The inconvenience of the inheritance of daughters* 5 *is remedied by marrying in their own tribes,* 7 *lest the inheritance should be removed from the tribe.* 10 *The daughters of Zelophehad marry their father's brothers' sons.*

1. The children of Gilead. These people represented the other half of the tribe of Manasseh, who had not been settled on the east side of Jordan, in the land of Gilead, but who were to receive their inheritance in the land of Canaan.

Spake before Moses. This was a meeting with Moses in a large assembly (see ch. 27:2).

2. By lot. See ch. 26:52–55.

3. Taken from the inheritance of our fathers. This was a desire to prevent constant change in tribal boundaries, owing to the possessions of the women passing to their children through husbands of another tribe.

4. Jubile. Literally, "a ram's horn," because such a horn was blown on the tenth day of the seventh month, to inaugurate the year of jubilee (see Lev. 25:10–15, 28, 30–33, 40, 50–54; Joshua 6:4–13).

6. Only to the family. Two limitations were given. Women without brothers were not to marry men of other tribes, nor men of another branch of the same tribe. These two precautions would preserve the families and the inheritances, so important in the Israelite economy.

11. Father's brothers' sons. That is, their cousins, the sons of their paternal uncles (see 1 Chron. 23:22).

13. These are the commandments. This subscription probably refers to the whole book of Numbers (see Lev. 27:34), including particularly its precepts of worship (chs. 28 to 30) and its civil regulations (chs. 27:11; 35:29).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

7 PK 205
6

[6]Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment.* Commentary Reference Series (Nu 35:2). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.